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# **FROM 'MISSION FIELD' TO 'MISSION FORCE'**

## **THE EMERGENCE OF MISSION ORGANISATIONS IN FORMER MISSION RECEIVING COUNTRIES**

**By**

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**Submitted to the Open University  
For Examination for the Degree of  
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is about Evangelical mission movements that have emerged in the Global South, particularly in Brazil, Ghana and India from the 1970s onwards. An important development among Evangelical churches since the Second World War has been the growth of Evangelicalism in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Former 'mission fields' have turned into 'mission forces' and changed the scenario of global missionary enterprise.

The ability of the Christian faith to be translated into any cultural context, the so-called 'translatability principle' of Christianity proposed by Andrew Walls, has been the starting point for analysing and evaluating the level of mission awareness and the models of mission involvement evident in Evangelical churches in the studied countries. However, the translatability principle is not sufficient to explain the emergence of mission initiatives and the models of mission engagement used by newer sending countries in the Global South. There are other issues that influence the way mission movements emerge and the research has identified specific key factors contributing to the formation of mission structures through analysis of the reasons why they have started and how they have developed over the last forty years. These have been divided into internal, external and international factors in relation to the history, tradition and growth of Evangelical churches in each country. The analysis demonstrates that the combination of these factors creates a propitious ambience for mission initiatives. Comparison has also been made with historical processes in older sending countries and similar developments in other newer sending countries.

The information for this study derives primarily from interviews with mission leaders in Brazil, Ghana and India and from printed materials provided by mission organisations in these countries.

The thesis contains an important contribution to the Area of Mission Studies and particularly to the study of newer mission movements, providing a methodology for the analysis and evaluation of the viability and sustainability of mission organisations in the Global South.



**TO ALZIRA**

**With love and gratitude**

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ABU	Aliança Bíblica Universitária (Brazilian Branch of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students)
ACT	Association of Co-operation in Tunisia
AIC	African Independent Church, African Initiated Church, African Instituted or African Indigenous Church
AIM	African Inland Mission
AMEM	A Missão de Evangelização Mundial (World Evangelisation Mission - Brazil)
AMTB	Associação de Missões Transculturais Brasileiras (Association of Brazilian Cross-Cultural Missions)
BMS	Baptist Missionary Society
CBB	Convenção Batista Brasileira (Brazilian Baptist Convention)
CCG	Christian Council of Ghana
CLADE	Congreso Latinoamericano de Evangelización (Latin American Conference on Evangelisation)
CLC	Christian Literature Crusade
CMS	Church Missionary Society
COF	Christian Outreach Fellowship (Ghana)
COMIBAM	Cooperación Misionera Iberoamericana (Ibero American Mission Co-operation)
COMIMEX	Comisión Misionera Mexicana (Mexican Mission Committee)
CP	Church of Pentecost (Ghana)
CPP	Convention People's Party (Ghana)
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSI	Church of South India
EEMA	European Evangelical Mission Association
EFI	Evangelical Fellowship of India
EPC	Evangelical Presbyterian Church (Ghana)
FTL	Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana (Latin American Theological Fraternity)
FUNAI	Fundação Nacional do Índio (National Indigenous Foundation – Brazil)
GCOWE	Global Conference on World Evangelisation
GEC	Ghana Evangelism Committee
GEMA	Ghana Evangelical Mission Association
GNI PPP	Gross National Income in Purchasing Power Parity
IFES	International Fellowship of Evangelical Students
IMA	India Mission Association
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INC	Indian National Congress
IPB	Igreja Presbiteriana do Brasil (Brazilian Presbyterian Church)



IPC	Indian Pentecostal Church of God
ISAL	Iglesia y Sociedad en América Latina (Church and Society in Latin America)
IURD	Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus (Universal Church of the Kingdom of God - Brazil)
JMN	Junta de Missões Mundiais (World Mission Board - Brazil)
JMN	Junta de Missões Nacionais (National Mission Board - Brazil)
LMS	London Missionary Society
MANI	Movement of African National Initiatives
MEC	Movimiento Estudiantil Cristiano (Student Christian Movement)
NCC	National Christian Council (India)
NDC	National Democratic Congress (Ghana)
NEMA	Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSC	Newer Sending Country
OC	Overseas Crusade
OM	Operation Mobilisation
OSC	Older Sending Country
PT	Partido dos Trabalhadores (Labour Party - Brazil)
REMAP I	Research on Missionary Attrition by the WEA Mission Commission
REMAP II	Research on Missionary Retention by the WEA Mission Commission
SEPAL	Serviço de Evangelização para a América Latina (Brazilian Branch of OC International)
SIUC	South India United Church
SPCK	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts
SU	Scripture Union
SVM	Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions
UGCC	United Gold Coast Convention (Ghana)
ULAJE	Union of Latin American Protestant Youth
UMN	United Mission to Nepal
UPG	Unreached People Group
WCC	World Council of Churches
WEA	World Evangelical Alliance
WEA-MC	World Evangelical Alliance Mission Commission
WEC	World Evangelisation Crusade
WMS	Wesleyan Methodist Society
YWAM	Youth with a Mission

## CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

### FROM MISSION FIELD TO MISSION FORCE

“From Mission Field to Mission Force” was the phrase coined by a Brazilian mission leader to describe the paradigm shift that has occurred where many countries traditionally considered to be ‘mission fields’ and the recipients of Western missionary activity are now the senders of cross-cultural missionaries to other nations.<sup>1</sup> The expression denotes a change both in the reality of global mission enterprises and in the attitude of churches and leaders in these countries.

The purpose of this first chapter is to provide the background to the subject of this thesis and to explain how the research has developed. It includes my personal relationship to the theme and experience in the area of cross-cultural mission. The specific question to be addressed during this study is introduced and explained. The chapter outlines the methodology for the research, clarifying the study’s limitations, areas of investigation, the process and strategy as well as the challenges experienced during the field research.

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<sup>1</sup> Santos, Jonathan dos, ‘De Campo Missionário a Força Missionária’ [From Mission Field to Mission Force], in *Ultimato*, November 1978

## 1. Defining the Theme

An important development among Evangelical<sup>2</sup> churches since the Second World War has been the growth of Evangelicalism in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The axis of Evangelical Christianity has moved South and East on the global map. Conservative statistics estimate that in the year 2000, 60% of Evangelicals lived in those three continents, compared with only 25% in 1960.<sup>3</sup>

As a result of the growth of Evangelical churches in the so-called 'Global South', missionary movements have also emerged, creating a completely new scenario of global

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<sup>2</sup> The term 'Evangelical' is used from now onwards and throughout this whole thesis in a broad sense including all Protestant, Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches and their followers. McGee, Gary B., 'Evangelical Movement' in Moreau, A. Scott (ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, 2000:338. There is an extensive discussion on the meaning of 'Evangelical'. George Marsden applies the term to "any Christian tradition enough to affirm the basic beliefs of the old 19<sup>th</sup> century evangelical consensus". And, according to him these are: 1) The Reformation Doctrine of the final authority of the Bible; 2) The historical character of God's saving work recorded in Scripture; 3) Salvation to eternal life based on the redemptive work of Christ; 4) The importance of evangelism and mission; and 5) The importance of a spiritual transformed life. Marsden, George, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 1991:4,5. David Bebbington says about Evangelicals in Britain that "in the case of Britain there is relatively little doubt that, in the era since the opening of the Second World War, the term has properly been applied to all the Protestants inside and outside the established churches who have committed to spreading the gospel at home and abroad – the 'evangelistic forces' of the land". Bebbington, David, 'Evangelicalism in Its Settings: The British and American Movements since 1940' in Bebbington, David and George Rawlyk, *Evangelicalism – Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism of North America & the British Isles and Beyond 1700-1900*, 1994:365. Bebbington suggests also that Evangelicalism has four characteristics: 1) Stress on Conversion - Conversionism; 2) Activism, 3) Great respect in treating the Bible – Biblicism; and 4) Centrality of the cross – Crucicentrism. Bebbington 1991:366,367. Oliver Barclay adds to the four characteristics mentioned by Bebbington a fifth one: Christ-centred. Barclay, Oliver, *Evangelicalism in Britain 1935-1995*, 1997:11. Barclay divides the Evangelicals in sub-divisions such as conservative, liberal and fundamentalists. Barclay 1997:12,13. Lionel Caplan mentions a common identification of conservative Evangelicals with fundamentalism, saying that "in Western Christianity, where the expression was first mooted, fundamentalism has come to identify conservative evangelicals inside the mainline Protestant denominations, as well as charismatic sects which comprise what is now the fastest-moving current within the Christian world". Caplan, Lionel 'Introduction – Popular Conceptions of Fundamentalism' in Caplan Lionel, ed., *Studies in Religious Fundamentalism*, 1987:1. Bebbington does not agree with that identification, affirming that "because Evangelicalism has changed so much overtime any attempt to equate it with Fundamentalism is doomed to failure". Bebbington, David, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*, 1989:275. Other texts on the subject are: Murray, Ian, *Evangelicalism Divided: A Record of Crucial Change in the Years 1950 to 2000* (2000); Tidball, Derek, *Who are Evangelicals?* (1994); Stackhouse, John, *Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method* (2000); Hicks, Peter, *Evangelicals and Truth* (1996); Bassett, Paul Merritt, 'Evangelicals' in Lossky, Nicholas, José Míguez Bonino, John S. Pobee, Tom Stranky, Geoffrey Wainwright and Paulina Webb, eds., *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* (1991)

<sup>3</sup> Johnstone, Patrick and Mandryk, Jason, *Operation World*, 2001:25; See also Jenkins, Philip, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, 2002:90

missionary enterprise.<sup>4</sup> These countries have thus been called Newer Sending Countries (NSCs) in contrast to the traditional sending nations, called Older Sending Countries (OSCs).<sup>5</sup> The expressions 'older' and 'newer' refer respectively to the longer history of sending missionaries from the West (Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand) and from the more recent mission movements from nations in other continents. It is important, though, to be aware of the fact that some of the NSCs, such as India, have sent missionaries for more than a century. The distinction between 'older' and 'newer', therefore, has not only to do with the length of the history of mission movements, but also with a common pre-conception that missionaries went from the 'West to the rest' of the world.

This thesis is about the 'mission fields' that have turned into 'mission forces'. In other words, it focuses on the new wave of mission initiatives originating from countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America that have been receiving Christian missionaries for centuries but have, particularly in the last four decades, also become sending countries. These new 'mission forces' are not only targeting their own continents in terms of missionary activity but also making Europe and North America their 'mission fields'. This remarkable development needs to be analysed and evaluated. The increasing number of missionaries from the original 'receiving countries' coming to what were historically 'sending countries' is also an important factor in the reshaping of Christianity in countries traditionally considered to be Christian. There is some documentation concerning the expectations of OSCs relating to the growth of

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<sup>4</sup> There is a debate about the best expression to use to define the countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Some of the suggested terms are Third World, Two Thirds World, Global South, Developing Countries (used by the UN), LATFRICASIA (used by Donald McGavran) or Majority World. In this thesis the terms 'Global South' and 'Newer Sending Countries' (NSCs) are used, being often used by mission leaders in these continents. See further discussion in Crawley, Winston, *World Christianity: 1970-2000*, 2001:11 and Pate, Larry, *From Every People*, 1989:12-14

<sup>5</sup> In order to highlight the paradigm shift in the Evangelical mission movements worldwide, I use the terms 'older' and 'newer' sending countries as in WEA-MC, *Starting and Strengthening National Mission Movements*, 2001:1

movements in NSCs but, after almost forty years of mission initiatives from Africa, Asia and Latin America, there has been little evaluation from a Global South perspective.<sup>6</sup> The purpose of this thesis, therefore, is to identify the specific key factors contributing to the formation of newer mission structures, particularly in NSCs, by considering why they have started and how they have developed.

## **2. Personal Experience and Involvement**

My first encounter with a Brazilian initiative for cross-cultural mission was in 1983, on a visit to a Brazilian missionary working in Peru. I was a missionary myself, sent by a Swedish mission and working in Brazil (the country where I was raised), but before that visit did not appreciate the potential of the mission force emerging in Latin America and the enormous challenges faced by these new mission movements in order to maintain their missionaries abroad. For five years (1985 to 1989), I was the mission executive of my denomination in Brazil and until 1995 the coordinator of the missionary training programme. As representative for my denomination I became engaged in the Brazilian Association of Cross-Cultural Missions (AMTB), and served as Chairman of the Association for four years (1991 to 1995).

Through my involvement with mission movements in Brazil new contacts were established (especially in Latin America) and I was invited to be part of the leadership of COMIBAM, the Ibero-American Co-operation in Mission. As Chairman of COMIBAM (1997 to 2000), I had the opportunity to keep up continuous dialogue through personal visits and meetings with church and mission leaders in the twenty-five

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<sup>6</sup> For examples of that expectation, see Pate 1989:44-49

countries where COMIBAM is active. Since 1992, I have also been part of the Mission Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA-MC), and from 1999 responsible for links with the leadership of national mission movements worldwide. These contacts have led to meetings with a variety of mission movements in different countries in Africa, Asia and Europe. I have maintained my contact with the Swedish mission having been its Executive Director for Latin America for thirteen years and having worked extensively with both its ideological foundations and its strategic plans. As part of my personal involvement in mission organisations in Brazil, my post-graduate dissertation (MTh) was on the Brazilian mission movements and in particular the development of the AMTB from its inception in 1976.

This combination of opportunities on denominational, national, continental and international levels has given me unique experience of mission movements, particularly among NSCs.

### **3. Changing Patterns of Missionary Organisations: Introducing the Emergence of Mission Movements in the Global South**

Mission movements in NSCs are both a product of traditional mission and examples of new models of missionary initiatives that have emerged to enable the expansion of the Christian faith. Often these movements have resulted in the formation of distinct missionary organisations. The predominant model for missionary outreach among Evangelical churches until the 1960s was the Western missionary society, which was organised as a voluntary organisation. Chapter Two of the thesis discusses in more

detail the legacy of missionary movements from OSCs and their connection with the political and economic expansion of these countries. In Chapter Three, attention is turned to voluntary associations and how they have been used as the main organisational model for the missionary outreach of the Christian Church.

Among Evangelical churches in NSCs, it was mainly in the 1970s that the first mission movements were started, coinciding with major international events, such as the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelisation in 1974. However, there were also other factors that contributed to the emergence of mission initiatives in Africa, Asia and Latin America, for instance the new political openness and the economic growth in some of the countries. In 1978 the General Secretary of the Indian Evangelical Mission, Theodore Williams, said, speaking on behalf of the Evangelicals in NSCs:

A significant development in the history of the Church in our age is the rise of indigenous missionary movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America... Third World missions have just made a beginning.<sup>7</sup>

Some of the statistical projections foresaw that by the year 2000 there would be more Evangelical missionaries from NSCs than from OSCs.<sup>8</sup> However, the growth of these mission organisations has been uneven. In some countries, such as Brazil, Nigeria and Korea, the rapid growth of the Church has resulted in a strong missionary movement, while in others there have been few mission initiatives.

In NSCs, mission efforts are represented by structures of different types, following partly the pattern seen in Europe and North America. Models of mission were translated

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<sup>7</sup> Williams, Theodore, 'Bombay Consultation Papers Released', *MNS Pulse*, 25/12 1978:2

<sup>8</sup> Keyes, Lawrence and Larry Pate, 'Two-Thirds World Missions: The Next 100 Years', *Missiology: An International Review* 21/2 (April, 1993)

and assimilated by national churches and adaptations created new forms of doing mission based on different political, economic and cultural contexts. The common denominator in all these models of mission structures, however, is the fact that they can all be regarded as voluntary associations.

The mission movements are still growing in number both in OSCs and NSCs; at the same time, competition between them increases. There are limited resources, especially in local churches, and the tendency is to favour organisations that best show tangible and quantifiable results. The emergence of 'managerial mission' has resulted in a trend within mission movements where, as in society generally, only the stronger organisations survive. The globalisation of the neo-charismatic movements is an example of how the concept of strategic mission as a business has replaced the traditional voluntary, and often sacrificial, nature of mission within the Christian Church.<sup>9</sup>

There is no doubt that the mission initiatives emerging in traditional 'mission fields' are important players in the religious sphere worldwide, influencing the way Christianity is perceived today. In reference to the growth of Christian churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America and their influence (through immigration and missionary activity) on Europe and North America, Jenkins predicts:

If in fact the bulk of the Christian population is going to be living in Africa, Asia, or Latin America, then practices that now prevail in those areas will become ever more common across the globe. This is especially likely when those distinctive religious

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<sup>9</sup> The term 'managerial mission' is defined by Samuel Escobar as a "missionary action reduced to a linear task that is translated into logical steps to be followed in a process of management by objectives, in the same way in which the evangelistic task is reduced to a process that can be carried on following marketing principles". Escobar, Samuel, 'Evangelical Missiology: Peering into the Future at the Turn of the Century', in Taylor, W., ed., *Global Missiology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 2000:109-112



patterns are transplanted northward, either by migration, or by actual missions to the old imperial powers, to what were once the core nations of world Christianity.<sup>10</sup>

The following tables show the growth of Evangelical mission movements in some NSCs from 1972 to 2000.<sup>11</sup> The countries mentioned are some of the most active in Asia, Africa and Latin America in sending missionaries cross-culturally. The three highlighted countries (Brazil, Ghana and India) have been selected for deeper analysis.

**Table 1: Number of Mission Organisations in NSCs**

Country	1972	1980	1988	1992	2000
Burma/Myanmar	2	17	22	22	40
<b>India</b>	26	140	184	198	440
Japan	32	50	74	54	52
Korea	7	31	104	80	166
Philippines	13	37	54	62	122
Singapore	4	52	67	33	43
Thailand	3	5	9	10	24
<b>Ghana</b>	0	30	46	44	60
Kenya	2	36	62	59	53
Malawi	n.a.*	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Nigeria	4	63	84	68	110
South Africa	6	10	11	86	126
Uganda	1	6	11	11	19
Congo – DRC	3	37	44	34	39
Zimbabwe	0	10	14	18	31
Argentina	7	9	19	23	39
<b>Brazil</b>	26	40	57	73	132
Chile	2	1	1	8	16
Colombia	2	9	9	20	33
Costa Rica	3	1	1	16	32
Guatemala	3	6	16	21	31
Mexico	5	11	24	30	56
Peru	0	2	4	9	31

\* n.a. – no data available

<sup>10</sup> Jenkins 2002:107-108

<sup>11</sup> The statistics ref. 1972, 1980 and 1988 are from Pate: 1989; ref. 1992 are from Johnstone, Patrick, *Operation World*, 1993; and ref. 2000 are from Johnstone: 2001. There are no later statistics available

Since the 1970s there has been a clear growth of mission organisations in the Global South, as seen in table 1, increasing in some cases from just a few to a considerable number of national initiatives. India stands out with an increase from twenty-six to 440 mission organisations in three decades. Ghana had none in 1972 and reported sixty in 2000. In Brazil the number grew from twenty-six to 132 in the same period. The same phenomenon has occurred in other Asian, African and Latin American countries. In a few countries, such as Japan and Kenya the number has decreased.

**Table 2: Number of Cross-Cultural Missionaries in NSCs**

Country	1972	1980	1988	1992	2000
Burma/Myanmar	10	1,010	2,560	2,313	3,160
<b>India</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>3,328</b>	<b>8,905</b>	<b>n.a.*</b>	<b>44,000</b>
Japan	137	125	291	407	397
Korea	38	199	1,184	2,237	12,000
Philippines	170	586	1,814	2,159	2,829
Singapore	10	116	646	567	715
Thailand	8	0	132	117	884
<b>Ghana</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>843</b>	<b>1,545</b>	<b>672</b>	<b>750</b>
Kenya	15	1,002	2,242	2,166	673
Nigeria	820	1,141	2,959	2,873	3,700
South Africa	84	617	999	2,509	2,622
Uganda	5	47	1,113	920	773
Congo – DRC	9	990	2,731	2,086	445
Zimbabwe	0	496	1,540	240	250
Argentina	30	0	70	144	477
<b>Brazil</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>2,040</b>	<b>2,755</b>	<b>4,754</b>
Chile	10	0	0	102	233
Colombia	7	22	192	148	286
Costa Rica	11	0	3	107	331
Guatemala	8	27	90	123	255
Mexico	69	24	224	376	649
Peru	8	144	164	190	362

Table 2 confirms the trend seen in table 1 with a strong growth of cross-cultural missionaries being sent by these organisations. Again, India stands out with the almost incredible number of 44,000 missionaries at the end of the period. Over 90% of these

work cross-culturally within the Indian sub-continent, and are therefore included in the statistics provided by mission organisations. In several of the African countries the number of missionaries was highest in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but dropped during the second half of the 1990s. This was due probably to the economic situation of these countries, often related to armed conflicts. In Latin America growth has been slower but more consistent. For the three countries selected as case studies, a more detailed analysis is given in the respective chapter.

#### **4. Research Question to be Addressed: Reasons for the Emergence of Mission Movements in the Newer Sending Countries**

This research focuses on the newer mission movements that have emerged in Africa, Asia and Latin America since the 1970s. The study is based on the historical development of mission organisations within the Evangelical sphere, the motives people and churches have had for engaging in mission and the ways the sending organisations have organised themselves during the years.

The primary set of questions addressed is: What specific factors have contributed to the development of dynamic mission movements in certain countries? How do newer mission movements organise themselves and how effective are they in sending and supporting cross-cultural missionaries? Are there important changes in terms of global mission as a result of the emerging missionary activity in NSCs? What are the main characteristics common to these newer mission movements that are identifiable in the studied countries? How do these characteristics relate to the older sending movements?

## 5. Rationale for the Study

The research is in the field of Mission Studies and relates to the developments of Evangelical mission movements and organisations that have emerged in the Global South since the 1970s. The analysis starts from the principle of translatability used by Andrew Walls to describe the establishment of church structures in receiving countries and applied to the emergence of mission movements in these nations.<sup>12</sup> The translatability principle is seen both in the transmission of faith as such, resulting in national churches, (Walls's particular focus), and also in the transference of missionary models, resulting in the establishment of autochthonous mission movements, which is the focal point of this study. Translatability is defined as the ability of a message or a model to be translated into another culture. It is applied by Walls particularly to the gospel, and the process of being adapted to the local situation.<sup>13</sup>

Walls has extensively described the process of transmission of faith, particularly from Europe to Africa, in two of his most significant works, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History – Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (2000) and *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (2002). In a series of articles, some of which are reproduced in the cited books, Walls focuses primarily on West Africa. However his analysis includes a worldwide perspective that can be applied to the countries investigated in this study.

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<sup>12</sup> Walls, Andrew, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History – Studies in the Transmission of Faith*, 2000:25

<sup>13</sup> Walls 2000:22. Walls affirms the “infinite translatability of the gospel”, based on the history of the expansion of the Christian faith

### 5.1. The Translatability Principle

According to Walls, Christianity can be translated into any culture at any time. This is known as the translatability principle. African theologians Lamin Sanneh and Kwame Bediako agree with this viewpoint, using essentially the same terminology as Walls.<sup>14</sup> The principle is also defended by Latin American and Asian theologians, believing that the Christian message is translatable and relevant to any cultural context and language group regardless of its religious, linguistic or historical background.<sup>15</sup> This is seen, for instance, in the way that theologians and missiologists in the Global South expect full contextualisation in the missionary process, both on the part of missionaries and those establishing Christian churches in the receiving culture.

Several terms have been used to express the effort of translating Christianity to a new context such as acculturation, assimilation and contextualisation. Sanneh and Bediako prefer the term 'assimilation' for describing the process of adapting and integrating the Christian message into a receiving culture.<sup>16</sup> After the recommendations from consultations on contextual theologies organised by the World Council of Churches and the official introduction of the term 'contextualisation' in 1972 by the WCC Theological

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<sup>14</sup> Sanneh, Lamin, *Translating the Message – The Missionary Impact on Culture*, 1989; and Bediako, Kwame, *Christianity in Africa – The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*, 1995

<sup>15</sup> Such as Dharmaraj and Escobar. See examples in the discussion on Colonialism and Contextualisation in Chapter Two

<sup>16</sup> Assimilation is defined by Luzbetak as "the complete blending of distinct cultures" Luzbetak, Louis J., *The Church and Cultures*, 1970:222. The *Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology* defines assimilation as a social process, being "the process by which individuals of foreign or minority cultures learn the language, habits, and values of the standard or dominant culture in which they reside". The corresponding cultural process is called 'acculturation'. 'Assimilation' in Levinson, David and Melvin Ember, eds., *Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 1, 1996:112-115. See also 'assimilation' in Houtt, Thomas, *Dictionary of Modern Sociology*, 1977:28. Grunlen and Mayers affirm that "acculturation and assimilation differ in degree of adaptation to the new". Acculturation keeps both the old and the new, while assimilation "is the more extreme process" of full adaptation to the new culture. Grunlen, Stephen A. and Marvin K. Mayers, *Cultural Anthropology - A Christian Perspective*, 1988:80-83

Education Fund, many missiologists have favoured that term.<sup>17</sup> The concept of contextualisation has, however, been defined in multiple ways.<sup>18</sup> In this dissertation the term will be used to imply the process of translating the content of the Christian faith into a receiving culture, while being as faithful as possible to the original intent of the Biblical authors, and dialoguing with the new context so the Christian message is relevant to the local community. What is relevant to the discussion of mission movements in NSCs is the intentionality of the contextualisation process in a continuous dialogue between the transmitted message and the local culture.<sup>19</sup> This dialogue starts ideally when missionaries first arrive to a new context. However, the ongoing contextualisation should be processed primarily by the locals.<sup>20</sup>

Not much critical analysis has been done regarding the translatability principle of Christianity, but two counter-arguments can be raised: firstly that no religion can claim to be uniquely universal and, secondly, that history shows that Christianity has not been translated successfully into every culture.

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<sup>17</sup> Several consultations were held under the auspices of WCC such as the consultation on 'Dogmatic or Contextual Theology' in Bossey, Switzerland, in 1971 and the meeting of the Faith and Order Commission in Louvain, Belgium in the same year. Hesselgrave, David, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally*, 1991:134,135; Costa, Ruy O., 'Introduction: Inculturation, Indigenisation and Contextualisation' in Costa, Ruy O., ed., *One Faith, Many Cultures*, 1988:xii; Schreiter, Robert J., *Constructing Local Theologies*, 1985:2

<sup>18</sup> There is no single or broadly accepted definition of Contextualisation. Hesselgrave includes the whole Christian 'package' in his definition of contextualisation, saying that "contextualisation can be thought as the attempt to communicate the message of the person, works, word, and will of God in a way that is faithful to God's revelation, especially as it is put forth in the teachings of Holy Scripture, and that is meaningful to respondents in their respective cultural and existential contexts. Contextualisation is both verbal and nonverbal and has to do with theologising; Bible translation, interpretation and application; incarnational lifestyle; evangelism; Christian instruction: church planting and growth; church organisation; worship style – indeed with all of those activities involved in carrying out of the Great Commission". Hesselgrave 1991:143,144. Other terms used to describe the process of cultural adaptation are accommodation, adaptation, possessio, indigenisation and inculturation. See discussion in Bavinck, J.H., *An Introduction to the Science of Missions*, 1960:178,179 and Hesselgrave 1991:132,133

<sup>19</sup> See for example the WCC document 'A Treasure in Earthen Vessels: An Instrument for an Ecumenical Reflection on Hermeneutics', statement 49, 1998:16 ([www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/faith-and-order-commission](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/faith-and-order-commission)); Bonino, José Míguez, 'The Concern for a Vital and Coherent Theology', *The Ecumenical Review*, 1989:160-176; Hiebert, Paul, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 1985:103

<sup>20</sup> This aspect of 'ownership' will be clear in the 'self-missionising' and 'self-missiologising' processes in the NSCs, as described later in this Chapter

In the first place, it is clear that theology is central to the concept of universality. Christianity bases its claim of universality on the Bible, the normative basis for its beliefs. Walls affirms the “essentially vernacular nature of Christian faith, which rests on a massive act of translation, the Word made flesh, God translated into a specific segment of social reality as Christ is received there”.<sup>21</sup> According to Walls, other major religions do not place the same emphasis on the importance of translatability and Islam can only be followed fully through adopting the Islamic culture and using the Arabic language. Judaism has similar requirements for its followers, demanding the convert to become fully Jewish in customs and practices. Hinduism and Buddhism are not about a divine incarnation in humanity but very much the opposite. Translatability is therefore not so much an issue, although Hinduism and Buddhism may be adapted to receiving contexts. Walls says that for Christians, only the divine Word (identified as Jesus Christ) is “infinitely translatable”.<sup>22</sup>

Supporters of Islam would certainly not agree that Islamic texts, principles and rituals could not be translated into local contexts.<sup>23</sup> However, regardless of how other religions claim the ability of translation, if they are at all concerned about that, Christians believe that Christianity can and should be translated into every culture.

It is inevitable, however, that any message comes to a new context ‘wrapped in’ in some kind of language and cultural dress. ‘Cultural baggage’ from the West has often dominated the Christian heritage, resulting in the false impression of its close association with Western culture. It is important to recall that Christianity originated in the Middle East and then extended both towards the West and the East.

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<sup>21</sup> Walls, Andrew, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, 2002:29

<sup>22</sup> Walls 2002:29

<sup>23</sup> Waldman, Marylin R., ‘Translatability: A Discussion’ in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. XXII, No. 2, 1992:159-164

The second critical issue is whether Christianity has succeeded in being contextualised into different cultures. Again, we have the problem of cultural identification with the West since modern missionary movements have come mainly from Europe and North America. The challenge of communicating the Gospel in such a way that it finds resonance in receiving cultures is a matter of concern for Evangelical missions and is considered in later chapters. However, any failure on the part of missionaries or mission organisations to translate the Christian message into local languages and cultural forms does not prove that Christianity is not translatable. On the contrary, this study demonstrates that there is evidence that Christianity has found its local expression in a variety of receiving cultures and ethnic groups around the world. Today, the highest percentages are in Africa, Asia and Latin America.<sup>24</sup>

In an African context, Sanneh differentiates between two processes, the historical transmission through the work of missionaries and their attempt to translate the message into the receiving culture and the indigenous self-examination through “conscious critical reflection”.<sup>25</sup> This internal process is seen by Sanneh to be particularly significant as the gospel is understood and re-interpreted by the new believers, avoiding the danger that Christianity will remain a foreign religion and irrelevant to the local context. Through these processes, African Christianity can be freed from colonialism and imperialism and stand in its own right.<sup>26</sup> Sanneh affirms a two-fold effect in the encounter of Christianity with new cultures and languages. The translation forces “a distinction between the essence of the message, and its cultural presuppositions”, thus leading to new expressions in a receiving environment. At the same time, the target

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<sup>24</sup> Barrett David B., George T. Kurian and Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World*, 1982:4

<sup>25</sup> Sanneh 1989:29

<sup>26</sup> Sanneh, Lamin, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact*, 1983:166



culture is compelled to analyse its values and beliefs through this self-examination. The “mission is a catalyst of change”.<sup>27</sup>

According to Bediako, the translatability of Christianity means a claim of universality, and thus being relevant to every generation in every culture on the globe. He affirms that

Translatability is also another way of saying universality. Hence the translatability of the Christian religion signifies its fundamental relevance and accessibility to persons in any culture within which the Christian faith is transmitted and assimilated.<sup>28</sup>

Bediako’s concern, however, is that African Christian theology has to respond to the critique that defines Christianity as a foreign religion and not part of African tradition. Maluleke has summarised the difference between the two African theologians:

If Sanneh was concerned to demonstrate the independence of Christianity and Christian mission from colonialism and imperialism, Bediako is more concerned with responding to the charge of African intellectuals who say that Christianity can never become an adequate frame of reference for the full expression of African ideals of life.<sup>29</sup>

The different perspectives of Sanneh and Bediako show part of the complexity of applying the translatability principle in the African context. This complexity is clearly identified in the history of Christianity in the Global South and therefore relevant to the discussion on the emergence of mission movements on the so-called ‘mission fields’. The process is hence closely related to the whole issue of transmission of the Christian

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<sup>27</sup> Sanneh 1989:31,32

<sup>28</sup> Bediako 1995:109

<sup>29</sup> Maluleke, Tinyiko Sam, ‘Black and African Theologies in the New World Order’, *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 96, 1996:4

faith and the emergence of a local theology, including several layers of development in the establishment of autochthonous churches. These are:

- Transmission of faith through missionary activity;
- Translation of the message to local languages and cultures (for example translation of Bible texts);
- Assimilation and contextualisation of the receiving people, a process that often starts in the first generation of national converts;
- Re-interpretation of the message according to cultural and historical backgrounds;
- Re-definition of Christian doctrines and practices, keeping key elements and adding new emphases based on autochthonous hermeneutics; and
- New models of church and of mission.

Relevant aspects of these phases in the establishment of national churches and their creation of local expressions for mission are considered later in this study.

## **5.2. Pre-conditions for Translatability**

Walls bases his analysis of translatability (related to the context of missionary activity from the West) on three pre-conditions necessary to ensure relevant and dynamic churches on a mission field: volunteers, effective sending structures and effective communication.<sup>30</sup>

These pre-conditions look exclusively at the process of transmission of the Christian faith from a sending perspective. However, Walls agrees that for a church to be viable

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<sup>30</sup> Walls 2002:221

in a given context it should not just replicate a church model in the West but adapt its ecclesiastical structure and leadership style to local culture, in other words, what Sanneh calls assimilation.<sup>31</sup> Contextualisation<sup>32</sup> is therefore a necessary complement to transmission of faith. The tension will always be how much should be retained from the sending structure and model and how much should be introduced according to local culture. Walls affirms that if conversion and, consequently, indigenising do not occur, there has not been a proper response to the translated Christian message.<sup>33</sup>

The crucial aspect though is the question of ownership of the contextualisation process. Frequently the initiative of adapting the Christian message and ecclesiastical system to a particular context has been taken by the missionary. What is seen among Evangelical mission leaders in the Global South today is an awareness of being responsible for developing their own understanding of spirituality and of church structures. The identity of the newly established church is therefore extremely important, so that it finds its own way of expressing the Christian faith based on the translated scriptures and not only on ecclesiastical traditions from abroad.<sup>34</sup>

Although closely related to the above, the use of the translatability principle in this study is not primarily regarding the transmission of the Christian faith as such but rather the translation and contextualisation of mission structures following the expansion of Christianity into particular countries. The self-theologising and self-missionising processes in the NSCs, explained in the next section, go beyond the missionary effort to

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<sup>31</sup> Walls 2000:100

<sup>32</sup> See footnote 18 in this Chapter

<sup>33</sup> Indigenise is defined by Walls as “to live as a Christian and yet as a member of one’s own society and make the Church a ‘place to feel at home’”. Walls 2000:1,7,9

<sup>34</sup> See a comprehensive evaluation of the Translatability Principle in Chapter Seven

translate and adapt beliefs and forms, and make local Christians owners of the development of contextualised theology and missionary practice.

### 5.3. The Self-Missionising Process

The study aims to build upon Walls's, Sanneh's and Bediako's discussion on translatability by focusing on missionary movements that have arisen from churches established in traditionally receiving contexts within the Global South and those that depict the self-missionising aspect of NSCs.<sup>35</sup>

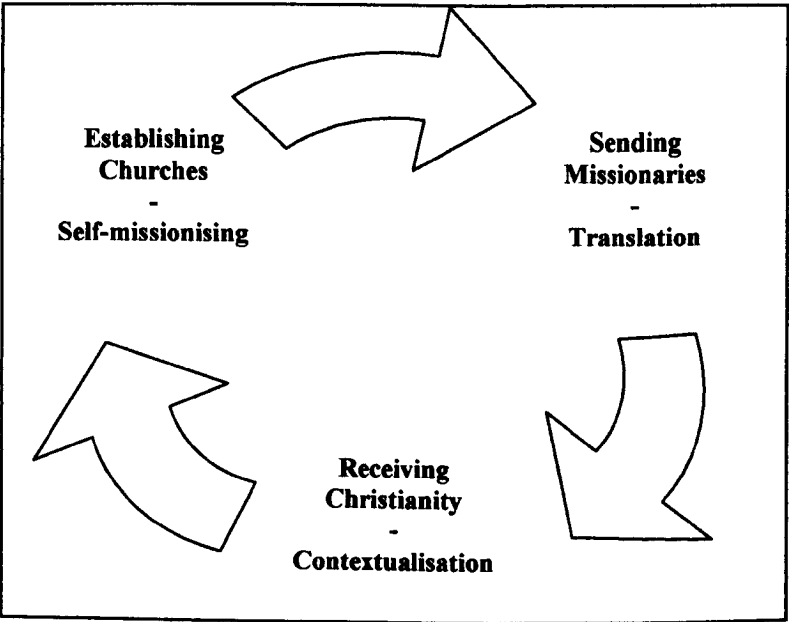
The self-missionising process could be seen as part of a circular process of Christian expansion. Established churches fulfil the pre-conditions highlighted above and, with different motives, send missionaries to receiving, cross-cultural contexts. The aim of this missionary effort, which involves translation and contextualisation, is to see people converted and local churches established. The newly-established church has the challenge of assimilating the Christian faith and identifying appropriate, contextualised forms of expression. Motivated to expand further, the new churches start their own mission movements and the cycle continues, leading to innovations in cross-cultural mission that can be called self-missionising, as represented in Diagram 1. These innovative missionary efforts are not just emulations or adaptations of, or simple

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<sup>35</sup> The expressions 'self-missionising' and 'self-missionising' have been used by authors such as William Taylor in Taylor 2000:6 and Warren Newberry in 'Contextualizing Indigenous Church Principles: An African Model', *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 2005:112, respectively. Self-missionising stands for the local initiatives to reflect on missiological issues and produce their own theological understanding of mission. Self-missionising describes the missionary practice coming out of the newer mission movements. The expressions make reference to the 'three-self' formula advocated by mission leaders such as Henry Venn (1796-1873), Rufus Anderson (1796-1880) and John Nevius (1829-1893) and is comparable with the expression 'self-theologising' used by Latin American Theologians, such as Costas and Escobar, to describe the contextualised theology done by Latin Americans. There are different models of contextual theologies as described by Stephen Bevans in *Models of Contextual Theology*. In Evangelical mission movements a 'synthetic model' seems to best define the most common model. Bevans, Stephen, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 2002:141-143

autochthonous reactions to imported models; they are often completely new ways of doing and reflecting mission based on local and national realities and the fruit of remarkable creativity.

**Diagram 1: The Translation, Contextualisation and Self-Missionising Process**



This study uses this pattern of analysis, applying it not just to local initiatives of expansion but also to the emergence of cross-cultural mission movements, projecting the Evangelical churches in the Global South onto a worldwide arena of evangelisation and mission. The three countries under consideration are studied starting with a brief review of the process of transmission of Christian faith to the country and the establishment and search for contextualised models of churches in the local environment. The research assesses the emerging mission initiatives that have arisen out of existing national churches and the resulting sending structures for cross-cultural mission.

One might expect that Evangelical churches established in missionary receiving countries would have the same missionary impetus as their organisations of origin. However, in the same way that dissenter and revolutionary movements have had to be born in their mother churches, in order to provide mission structures, the newer churches have to go through a process of ground-breaking. Walls uses as examples the dissenter movements within the Western Protestant churches and the innovations led by missionaries such as William Carey and Hudson Taylor, and mission leaders such as Rufus Anderson.<sup>36</sup>

Not surprisingly, history can be seen to repeat itself since ecclesiastical organisations tend to focus more on bureaucratic processes and the strengthening of organisational structures rather than on service and expansion outside their traditional boundaries. The idea of the 'parish church' or even of a Christian state (or equivalent) frequently determines the preservation of achieved expansion and the defence of conquered territory. Even when conditions are favourable for expansion, there is often the need for radical initiatives, involving personal sacrifice. There may be strong resistance by the official church leadership to service in the surrounding society and mission in other cultural contexts.<sup>37</sup>

#### **5.4. Contributing Factors**

The study demonstrates that in the cases of Brazil, Ghana and India, various factors have existed within the Evangelical churches and local society that have favoured the emergence of mission movements. These can be divided into three types: Internal, External and International. The internal factors are directly related to the mission

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<sup>36</sup> Walls 2000:244

<sup>37</sup> Compare Walls 2000:230, 243

movement, its church base and its development as organisation. The external factors relate to the society in which the mission movement is inserted. The international factors refer to the influence of global issues, trends, events and organisations upon the emergence of mission initiatives in a particular country. These analysed factors include:

Internal factors, such as:

- The existence of growing Evangelical churches with the explicit objective of expanding to other locations and countries
- A theology of mission that includes the needed motivation for expansion
- Entrepreneurial leadership organising mission associations
- Available personnel and financial resources

External factors, such as:

- A society with liberty to establish voluntary associations, based on existing models of voluntarism
- A growing economy in society and resources available for mission initiatives
- Social, political and ecclesiastical factors

International factors, such as:

- International exposure and contacts
- Diasporic groups in other countries
- Global connections and co-operation provided by national and international networks such as national associations of missions

These factors are partially related to Walls's set of pre-conditions, particularly those that demonstrate the process of translation of church and mission models (internal factors).

The external and international factors, which verify local conditions and highlight the

international perspective of current mission enterprises, are not systematically assessed by Walls, Sanneh and Bediako. Therefore, these factors are identified for each country and analysed, compared and evaluated in order to prove that they can be applied on a global scale.

Interestingly, the main model for mission structures both in OSCs and in NSCs is that of voluntary associations, a point that is also emphasised by Walls.<sup>38</sup> Inspired and encouraged by voluntarism seen in Western missions, newer mission movements of the Global South have frequently opted for organisations that are based on the free participation of people, both as senders and as missionaries. It seems that lay people in the churches are less loyal to church systems and more open to ground-breaking initiatives. These people become the volunteers of the mission enterprise and form the voluntary associations that help the established church to fulfil its missionary task. In addition to the internal factor of heritage, the presence of voluntarism in the surrounding society (an external factor) has strongly affected the choice of organisational model for mission initiatives in NSCs.<sup>39</sup>

### **5.5. Viability of Newer Mission Movements**

The emergence of a great number of mission organisations in Africa, Asia and Latin America has motivated discussion regarding the viability and sustainability of these mission movements. Are the emerging mission initiatives strong enough to impact Christianity globally? Questions raised by Church leaders both in NSCs and OSCs are

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<sup>38</sup> Walls 2000:225

<sup>39</sup> Definition of Voluntarism and the different dimensions of voluntary association are given in Chapter Three



concerned with structural issues such as the different stages of the process of sending missionaries to other countries and cultures, including screening, training, financial support, strategy and member care.<sup>40</sup>

Criticism, based on a comparison with standards recommended by Western mission organisations, focuses primarily on aspects of pre-field training and financial support. The relative affluence of mission organisations in North America and in Europe and their obligation to follow their countries' employment laws result in specific conditions for the selection of overseas workers and an increasingly expensive model of missionary work worldwide. The wealth of some mission movements, their huge investment in buildings and technology and high living standards of their missionaries, have also created, in some NSCs, an erroneous idea of the infrastructure needed for missionary work.<sup>41</sup>

## **6. Methodology for the Research**

### **6.1. Area of Research**

The focus of the research is on the emergence of Evangelical mission movements in NSCs, which are using different models of voluntary associations. The mission movements studied have been examined from a sociological perspective in order to identify and analyse the factors determining the development of such sending structures.

Areas studied include their historical background, the presence of sociological and

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<sup>40</sup> An interesting discussion that illustrates this is the attrition (REMAP I) and retention (REMAP II) studies done by the Mission Commission of World Evangelical Alliance and presented in the books *Too Valuable to Lose* (1997 – on attrition) and *Worth Keeping* (2007 – on retention)

<sup>41</sup> Bonk, Jonathan, *Mission and Money- Affluence as a Western Missionary Problem*, 1996:55

demographic variables, and the organisational models that have emerged. The investigation has also considered current issues faced in relation to roles and functions, such as leadership, financial support for on-field missionaries and choice of mission strategy.

Three countries with divergent histories and backgrounds were selected for detailed study: Brazil, Ghana and India. They represent traditional 'mission fields' that have become 'mission forces'. The three countries already have a relatively well-documented history of sending missionaries cross-culturally, making it possible to evaluate various trends and practices within their respective mission movements.

Brazil is the leading country in Latin America in terms of Evangelical mission movements. As seen in the Tables 1 and 2 in Section Three, the number of mission organisations in the country and of missionaries grew rapidly from 1972 to 2000. There is an interesting connection between the growth of the Evangelical churches in the 1950s and 1960s and the emergence of mission movements in the 1970s, but also a political and economic development in the country that has influenced the development of mission organisations. Brazil is a good example of a NSC that is considered to be Christian (with a Roman Catholic majority), in which a significant percentage of the population has converted to Evangelicalism. Another reason for choosing Brazil is the fact that I have lived for more than 40 years in Latin America and have had the opportunity to study Brazilian mission movements first hand.

Ghana is one of the more important missionary sending nations in Africa. Although not the largest it has seen a fascinating growth in the number of mission organisations and of cross-cultural missionaries since the 1980s, despite the relatively small size of the

Evangelical churches and limited financial resources. Ghana has a different religious heritage from Brazil and India, with the majority of the population coming from a background in traditional African religions. Another important aspect to consider is the fact that Ghanaian mission movements represent, in many cases, the strategy of reaching out through the Diaspora living mainly in OSCs. Access to data and good contacts with mission leaders in Ghana has also influenced the choice to study the country rather than another African nation.

India is the largest missionary sending nation in Asia, even though South Korea sends more missionaries outside the country borders. A high percentage of Indian missionaries are working among other ethnic groups within the Indian sub-continent. India is outstanding in its number of mission organisations, and the growth of its mission enterprise since the 1970s is notable. India presents a completely different religious scenario from Brazil and Ghana, as seen in the presence of three of the other major religions, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. Christianity has reached only 6.2% of the population but a considerable missionary force has emerged from the country.<sup>42</sup> India was also chosen because personal contacts with mission leaders and Church representatives, national associations and alliances of mission organisations facilitated data collection within and outside India.

Together, the three countries give a valuable picture of newer mission movements worldwide, representing a range of different religious and cultural backgrounds, distinctive political and economic situations and unique examples of development within Evangelical churches. All have seen mission movements emerge and are today important sending nations of cross-cultural missionaries.

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<sup>42</sup> Barrett et al. 2001:5

Data have been collected on the development of each of these movements and compared with a view to understanding the reasons behind the emergence and development of different models for mission agencies as voluntary associations. Other countries where mission movements have not emerged with the same dynamism have been considered for the sake of comparison, but in less depth.

The areas that the research aims to cover are:

- The translatability principle of the Christian faith applied to each of these countries and the contextualisation of church and mission models by the local churches;
- A short description of Evangelical churches in each nation, including sociological variables, demographic information and growth patterns;
- The application of the voluntary concept in each country;
- The identification of internal, external and international factors that have inspired a concern for mission in the country, and the possible limitations imposed by the lack of structures and models;
- The correlation between these factors and the ongoing process of translation through the self-missionising initiatives in NSCs towards the rest of the world;
- The contextualisation of ecclesiastical and missionary structures in NSCs;
- A descriptive analysis of organisational models currently used by mission movements, through in-depth case studies;
- An analysis of current issues and challenges faced by sending organisations in terms of establishing and sustaining their work; and,
- A comparison of the studied national movements under investigation.

The comparison between the different mission movements is based on key variables present in voluntary organisations such as motives for foundation, leadership roles, means of funding, association of people and defined strategy for common goals. Ways in which the organisations describe expected results, success and failure, are also compared. The qualitative standards set by the main associations to which the mission structures are affiliated are helpful tools in determining which criteria for success are applied.

The limitations in the comparison are primarily associated with the diverse religious and political background of the respective countries and the difference in the size of the Evangelical churches and consequently the scale of their missionary enterprises. Brazil is a fully Christianised country with a large Evangelical community. In Ghana, Evangelical churches are growing, but nevertheless face strong economic limitations and being influenced by traditional African religions. India has a pluralistic religious context with predominance of Hinduism and an Evangelical minority, which is often associated with the poorer castes.

## **6.2. The Thesis**

The research aims to show that the emergence of Evangelical mission movements in any given country requires a set of specific factors, forming a propitious context for ground-breaking initiatives of cross-cultural mission by local entrepreneurial leadership. The combination of these factors and of innovative action (breaking with traditional church structures) produces viable mission organisations with enough strength to send missionaries cross-culturally within and outside a respective country.

The study identifies internal, external and international factors that tend to account for the emergence of a movement to engage in mission among Evangelical churches in the countries in question. The research findings identify the variables involved at all stages in the development of mission movements, and provide an evaluation of those movements, particularly in relation to the process of moving from being a 'mission field' to becoming a 'mission force'. These new mission models are re-shaping the way missionary activity is being performed today and are directly influencing the worldwide expansion of the Christian faith. Using the translatability principle, as defined by Andrew Walls, as a starting point, the study goes beyond the translation of the Christian faith into respective countries. It is based on the premise that with the establishment of Christian churches ecclesiastical systems were also part of the translated package, including models of mission outreach. These models were often assimilated and reproduced by the nationals, particularly where there was a strong denominational alignment with the mother church. From the 1970s onwards a growing number of mission movements have emerged in NSCs, building partly on imported models and introducing innovative and contextualised forms of missionary sending structures.

The thesis is that the emergence of newer mission movements in traditional receiving countries is a result both of a translation process of voluntary mission models from OSCs and of autochthonous initiatives made possible by a combination of internal, external and international factors. These factors are identifiable and can be used to evaluate and measure the emergence, development and efficiency of any mission movement in NSCs.

### 6.3. Strategy and Limitations

The research follows a methodology that focuses on a qualitative approach, with an interaction of the researcher with the collected material based on a personal involvement in mission movements from the NSCs since the beginning of the 1980s. Earlier studies on the Brazilian and the Latin American mission movements gave a foundation for the analysis of the development of Evangelical mission organisations on a worldwide scale. Participation in one of the major global organisations for Evangelicals, the World Evangelical Alliance, has created outstanding opportunities for dialogue and establishing contacts throughout the world, facilitating the collection of data. At the same time, this personal involvement has required discipline and a special effort to be as objective as possible in the analysis of the findings and in drawing conclusions.

The study is limited to Evangelical mission movements based in Brazil, Ghana and India from the 1970s onwards. The term Evangelical is used in the context of this study to describe the various churches within the Protestant, Mainstream Evangelical and Pentecostal traditions.<sup>43</sup> The Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians are not included within the scope of this definition and mentioned only in the context of each country's Church history, or for the sake of comparison in a particular issue. It is important, however, to acknowledge the existence of Roman Catholic and Orthodox mission movements such as the 'Opus Dei' movement, the on-going missionary work done by Monastic Orders and the Pan-Orthodox Mission Board.

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<sup>43</sup> See footnote 2. Mainstream Evangelical stands here for the historic Evangelical churches, particularly of Free Church tradition such as Baptists, Congregationalists, Quakers, Methodists and Presbyterians and that are not historically Pentecostal in their theology

The research focuses on a limited number of mission organisations in each country. Selection has been particularly necessary in India and Brazil where the number of Evangelical mission movements is high and the organisations are spread over a vast geographical area. The goal behind the selection has been to achieve a broad representation and a variety of missionary sending organisations in terms of denominational background, type of organisational structure and nature of cross-cultural ministry. For the in-depth case studies, four organisations have been selected in each country, representing the principal categories of mission organisations seen in NSCs. One has a denominational structure, being the mission department of a mainstream church; one is an inter-denominational organisation with roots in an OSC; one is an inter-denominational agency originated through national initiatives and by autochthonous leadership; and one is a Pentecostal church.

The primary sources for information and the main target group for the interviews have been the Chief Executives of the mission organisations. Consequently, there is a recognisable bias in the answers from those who could be seen as 'gatekeepers' of the organisations. Sometimes there is also a defensive attitude. At the same time they express the definitions and rules adopted by the organisation and by and large accepted by people involved in the mission structure. Based on voluntarism, there is usually a requirement of continuous commitment to the philosophy and the strategy of the organisation, both by home staff and by missionaries. Whenever possible, other representatives of the organisations were also interviewed. In some cases the cultural setting did not allow this to happen and it would have required a longer personal relationship in order to make it feasible.



The difficulties of a multi-continental study are obvious. Geographical distances, cultural differences, language issues and local peculiarities are just some of the barriers that have had to be overcome. Time had to be spent travelling and, more importantly, in long conversations with local people. The dialogues with national leaders who had a more general overview of the situation in the country have facilitated the understanding of underlying issues in the very specific Evangelical sub-culture in the studied countries. Most of the time, the starting point for the analysis was my personal experience in Brazil, which was compared to similar situations in Ghana and India. This sometimes helped me to understand the local situation, but on other occasions resulted in me making presumptions. In order to minimise misunderstandings and erroneous generalisations the conclusions were submitted to national and continental leadership for their comments and suggestions. There is no doubt that the fact that I have a more in-depth knowledge of the Brazilian context and have had a longer relationship to mission leaders in the country has influenced the way the study has been carried out and the slightly different approach in comparison with the other countries.

## **6.4. The Research Process**

### **6.4.1. Literature Review**

The research started with a bibliographical study in order to define and acknowledge the state of the art of the existing written material and the analysis done on the issue of the mission movements from Africa, Asia and Latin America. The literature review included some of the standard books on worldwide mission history, most of them written by westerners; texts on the Western mission enterprise particularly towards the studied countries, including analysis of the relationship between mission and colonialism; books on organisational structures used by missions, especially on

voluntary associations; statistical materials on the status of Christianity in the studied countries and on the number of missionaries; available documentation on Church History and on mission movements, particularly from Brazil, Ghana and India and written by nationals; and, texts discussing key missiological areas and the challenge of cross-cultural mission in different settings.

There is a rich literature on the mission history of North America and Europe and some analysis about the mission efforts from other continents. The latter, with few exceptions, is written from a Western perspective. The bibliographical material has been used to define the missiological terminology and the identification of key issues. Literature on the mission movements from OSCs was included in order to provide a historical background and an ecclesiastical framework to the study. Newer texts related to the expansion of Christianity, particularly towards the Global South, such as Philip Jenkin's *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, Lamin Sanneh's *Disciples of All Nations – Pillars of World Christianity* and Samuel Escobar's *The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everywhere*, have given the current scenario of mission going in all directions. The sociological aspects have been explored through literature on organisations and voluntary associations, some of them also analysing non-Western contexts. In the general history of each country, various factors have been considered, such as political and financial developments that have influenced the formation of new mission organisations, for instance the restriction on missionary visas to enter India, or the nationalistic tendencies in Brazil during the 1930s and 1940s.

From an Evangelical point of view, there seems to be only a few deeper analyses of mission movements in NSCs. Some of the more recent studies include doctoral theses such as Bush, Luis, "Catalyst of World Evangelisation" (2002) and Klingsmith, Scott,

“Factors in the Rise of Missionary Sending Movements in East-Central Europe” (2002). Bush analyses the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement as a catalyst for global evangelisation, influencing mission initiatives in the Global South. Klingsmith looks at Hungary, Poland and Romania as mission sending countries. Another study on Central European mission movements is Anne-Marie Kool’s PhD thesis presented in the book *God Moves in a Mysterious Way – The Hungarian Protestant Foreign Mission Movement* (1993). My interaction with these three studies has been primarily through personal contact with the authors and discussion about their findings in the initial phase of my research. Aspects such as the importance of conferences and the existence of motivated leaders were part of Bush’s conclusions. The understanding of mission among national churches, restrictions owing to political situations and the need for oral sources complementing limited local literature were important factors in both Klingsmith’s and Koll’s analyses.

On the particular countries object of this study Emmanuel Anim’s thesis on ‘Prosperity Teaching in the Charismatic Ministries’ (2003) has been helpful to understand some of the theological reflection in Ghana related to the expansion of Evangelical churches. K. Rajendran’s doctoral thesis on Indian missions, published as a book with the title *Which Way Forward Indian Missions?* (1998) evaluates the development of autochthonous mission movements between the years 1972 and 1997 and has been an important source for the history of Evangelical mission in India. My own master’s dissertation on Evangelical mission movements in Brazil is so far the most comprehensive comparative study in this specific area of missiology in the Brazilian context.

There are also evaluations done on a less academic level that the current study have related to and that have been mentioned in the analysis of mission movements in the

NSCs. These include Ezemadu, Reuben, ed., *Models, Issues and Structures of Indigenous Missions in Africa* (2006); Ekstrom, Bertil, ed., *Aos Que Ainda Não Ouviram* [To Those Who Have Not Heard] (1998); World Evangelical Alliance Mission Commission, *Starting and Strengthening National Missionary Movements* (2001); and, COMIBAM Internacional, *La Iglesia Latina en Misión Mundial* [The Latin Church in Global Mission] (1997).

Another important resource has been articles published in missiological journals. Frequently missiologists and mission leaders in NSCs do not have the opportunity to print complete books but their texts are included in anthologies and in journals. The following periodicals have been invaluable sources for the study of newer mission movements, presenting articles by authors from the Global South: *Journal of African Christian Thought*, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, *Indian Missions*, *Missionalia*, *International Review of Mission*, *Connections – The Journal of the WEA Mission Commission*, *Indian Journal of Missiology*, *ACTS Theological Journal*, *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, *Missiology: An International Review*, *Indian Missiological Review*, *Dharma Deepika*, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, and *The Evangelical Quarterly*.

This work contributes to the field of mission studies being an analysis of Evangelical mission movements from the Global South based on original sources and declarations made by mission leaders in some of the leading NSCs. Although there is an increasing awareness among mission organisations in NSCs to document their history, there is still a lack of national overviews and of comparisons to similar mission movements in other countries. This study intends to be a contribution to fill part of that gap.

### **6.4.2. Statistical Material**

Statistical material confirms the growth and the trends in the studied countries. The main sources of statistics are the works of David Barrett and Patrick Johnstone,<sup>44</sup> with additional material from the national mission associations in the three countries. Statistical sources relating to the development of the mission movements from NSCs include Keyes and WEA.<sup>45</sup> The study of the number and the growth of the mission organisations in the chosen countries had the purpose of ascertaining the actual situation. The gathered data helped to produce graphs showing the growth of the missionary organisations during different periods and allowing initial comparisons between the countries. The limitation of the statistical material is due to the different ways mission movements calculate the number of their missionaries, depending on local definitions of what mission is and on ecclesiastical tradition of who should be called a missionary. There is also disparity in the scale of missionary activity between the three countries studied that should be taken into consideration. It is the combination of the statistical material and the field research that gives a more complete picture of the actual situation and makes it possible to draw well-grounded conclusions.

### **6.4.3. Interviews**

The field research started with the development of a questionnaire to be used in the contact with leaders of mission movements. The questionnaire included both directive and non-directive questions, establishing key parameters for comparison and, simultaneously, giving the opportunity for people to 'tell their story'. The questionnaire was firstly tested on mission leaders in Brazil and rewritten in response to feedback from those interviewed. One issue was how to avoid terms that were ambiguous.

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<sup>44</sup> Barrett et al. 1982 and 2001; Johnstone, 1993 and 2000

<sup>45</sup> Keyes, 1983 and World Evangelical Alliance Mission Commission, 2001

Another was the lack of recorded statistics on the number of missionaries during the years of existence of the mission organisation. For Brazil the questionnaire was translated into Portuguese in order to make it easier for the national leaders to understand. An English version was used in Ghana and India.

Different approaches were also employed such as personal interviews with a duration of one to two hours, the use of the questionnaire during regional and national events where people received the forms and handed them in the next day, and the use of telephone and email contacts. When a longer interview was not possible, the completed questionnaires were discussed briefly in order to clarify the meaning of the written answers. Telephone and email was used primarily to remind people to answer the questionnaire and to clarify ambiguous answers. Face-to-face interviews with mission leaders usually took place at the headquarters of the mission organisation, normally in the presence of other colleagues. In addition to completing the questionnaire, leaders also provided written and recorded materials and details of websites used by their organisations. The interviews and the gathering of information took place in visits to Ghana and India and in meetings outside these countries with leaders for Ghanaian and Indian mission organisations. In the case of Brazil the collection of data has been a process that began some years ago, but has been more intensive during the actual research period.

The building of an atmosphere of trust was facilitated in Ghana and India by national leaders who are recognised and respected by the mission Chief Executives. Being an official representative of the World Evangelical Alliance, I have had easy access to the main leadership of mission organisations and have been treated with great respect. The struggle for me personally has sometimes been to know how to relate to people in a

particular local culture and to understand where boundaries lie for questioning and discussing the more sensitive aspects of missionary work. There was often a positive attitude and a polite reception of a recommended stranger. In most cases there was enough honesty and transparency to ensure that I did not invade the privacy of the mission organisation, but also an openness to discuss the more delicate issues of their institution. The presence of second level leadership during the interviews limited, in some cases, the freedom of the Chief Executives to express deeper concerns about the organisation they represented. On other occasions, the critical issues were raised by more junior colleagues. The conducting and the development of the interviews varied, therefore, according to the particular setting.

In Brazil the situation differed from Ghana and India owing to the fact that I have known some of the Chief Executives for more than twenty years and have had the opportunity to interact with most of them for a longer period of time. The interviews with them gave a deeper understanding of the critical issues and set a pattern for the in-depth case studies and interviews in other cultural settings.

The use of interview forms varied significantly in the different contexts where I applied them. People who were accustomed to filling out forms and had themselves been in the position of interviewing tended to be more complete in their answers. Others responded in a laconic way, often giving the impression that they were answering according to what they believed the interviewer expected to hear. As a result of these limitations, follow-up questions were used in order to clarify the answers and to give a better understanding of the organisations.

The answers to the questionnaire were tabulated and analysed and the findings included in the description of the development of the mission movements in each country. The additional material and details of websites provided by the mission leaders provided valuable complementary data. Some of the conclusions from the initial field research could be seen as ‘sensitising concepts’ related to the newer mission movements.<sup>46</sup> These concepts have given important orientation for the in-depth case studies.

All the interviews have been documented and collected in a CD-rom that will be kept in the Library of All Nations Christian College, UK. Copies of consulted websites, leaflets and other information material from the studied mission organisations have also been saved and are available for other scholars.

## **7. The Outline of the Thesis**

Chapter Two of the thesis goes more into detail regarding the different models used by mission movements in Western nations, particularly in Britain and North America in the period 1750 to 1950. These movements have had a strong influence on the models of mission organisations seen today in traditionally receiving countries and are therefore important to understand. The changes in the concepts of sending and the new paradigms in mission during that period are also highlighted.

Chapter Three sets the sociological framework for mission organisations as voluntary associations. Examples from the history of the Christian Church and from movements in

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<sup>46</sup> ‘Sensitising concepts’ are defined as “an important starting point, they are the germ of the emerging theory, and they provide the focus for further data collection”. Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, 1983:180



NSCs demonstrate why voluntarism is an appropriate concept to use to describe mission organisations.

Chapter Four gives a brief introduction to the historical development of Evangelical churches in Brazil, showing the application of the translatability principle, and analyses the mission movements that have emerged in the country from the 1970s onwards. The field research and the in-depth studies serve as foundations for the analysis of Brazilian mission movements, illustrating the self-missionising process.

The following two chapters look at Ghana and India in the same way as Chapter Four on Brazil, comprising a historical background to Evangelical churches in the country and the analysis of mission structures that have emerged since the 1970s.

In Chapter Seven, the applicability of the translatability principle is evaluated, the presence and the importance of the key factors contributing to the emergence of mission movements in the three countries studied are summarised, and the characteristics of mission initiatives in the NSCs are compared, including also a brief comparison to OSCs.

Finally, Chapter Eight reinforces the process that NSCs have gone through, becoming the 'new mission force'. The concluding chapter includes a brief summary of the research, applying the outcomes to the current developments of Evangelical cross-cultural mission movements worldwide and commenting on the viability and the global role of these newer movements. Areas that would need further research and consideration are also mentioned and the contribution of this study to the field of Mission Studies is exemplified.

## CHAPTER 2

# THE TRANSLATION OF CHRISTIANITY FROM THE WEST TO THE REST<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

The translatability<sup>2</sup> principle of Christianity is clearly shown in the missionary activity coming out of Europe and North America to the non-Western countries. Not only was the Gospel translated into receiving cultures but also church and mission patterns were transplanted and a mission ideology was impressed upon the emerging churches. The objective of this chapter is therefore to trace the historical development of Western mission movements, particularly those from the UK and the United States in the so-called ‘modern era of missions’, focusing primarily on ideological issues such as the motivation behind the emergence of sending organisations within Evangelical churches, criteria for determining the success of missionary enterprise and central themes and key models adopted in the missionary outreach.<sup>3</sup>

A brief historical review of mission movements from the West is appropriate because Evangelical churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America were generally established during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and missionary models used today by

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<sup>1</sup> The expression ‘from the West to the Rest’ has been commonly used to describe the missionary work from the Western countries to other continents. The word ‘rest’ could give an idea of inferiority and is often refuted by those who are included in the term, and is employed here only to emphasise the mindset of mission that was dominant during the colonial epoch

<sup>2</sup> Walls 2000:25. The term ‘translatability’ is used by Andrew Walls to describe the transformations caused by the transmission of the Christian faith into a receiving culture

<sup>3</sup> The Modern Era of Mission is usually considered from 1792 onwards, starting with William Carey and the formation of mission societies in England

NSCs reflect those of Western movements. Ecclesiastical concepts were translated into receiving cultures and a contextualisation process generated new forms of local congregations, although with a basic DNA from the mother churches. NSCs have taken many different approaches to these translated models, sometimes emulating them, sometimes reacting against them and searching for new kinds of mission engagement. As shown in later chapters, the translation and contextualisation processes have been followed by an innovative projection towards cross-cultural mission based on local realities and contextualised sending structures. The mission innovation seen among NSCs relates both to missiological reflection and to missionary initiatives, which are called ‘self-missilogising’ and ‘self-missionising’ respectively in this study. However, the analysis of the NSCs’ mission movements will also demonstrate that the motivation behind the founding of sending organisations, their success and their structures are comparable with models that were instrumental in starting Evangelical churches in respective countries. Therefore, it is important to understand the mission efforts from the OSCs.

The chapter is divided in four parts. The first part describes the development of mission organisations in Evangelical circles in the West, concentrating on general observations about the expansion of the Christian faith during the colonial and post-colonial periods. The second part mentions the different motives that led to mission initiatives. The third part looks at criteria for evaluating success in the missionary enterprise. These translated motives and criteria play an important role in determining the way mission movements in NSCs function today, particularly in the early stages of the development of the self-missionising process. The fourth part discusses aspects related to colonialism and contextualisation. Frequently, criticism regarding colonialism and imperialism is focussed on the UK and the United States as the primary representatives of Western

mission. Nevertheless, mission movements from other Western countries have also faced criticism and a broader picture of mission movements from Europe and North America would need to take this into consideration as well.<sup>4</sup> All these are significant elements to understand the translation process that occurred during mission history, the effort of contextualisation by locals and, in many cases, the strong reaction against imported systems.

## **1. Development of Protestant and Evangelical Mission Movements**

Mission movements in NSCs are strongly influenced by the different models in the history of the expansion of the Western Church, particularly by the kind of mission societies and faith missions that brought Evangelicalism to these countries. The translation process had already started with Roman Catholic mission movements and in the migration of Protestants to the Global South. However, it was not until the emergence of the Pietistic and Puritan movements and the following Evangelical streams that permanent missionary work was seen among Protestants.

### **1.1. The Background to Modern Mission Movements**

In 1649 the New England Company was founded in England as the first Protestant missionary sending structure exclusively devoted to missionary purposes.<sup>5</sup> The New England Company became “the fountainhead of the voluntary system in English

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<sup>4</sup> See texts from the Durham Consultation in 1982 gathered in Christensen, Torben, and Hutchison, William, eds., *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialistic Era 1880-1920*

<sup>5</sup> Chaney, Charles, ‘The Missionary Situation in the Revolutionary Era’ in Beaver, Pierce, ed., *American Missions in Bicentennial Perspective*, 1977:15

Christianity; it was also the commencement of churchly voluntarism”.<sup>6</sup> Missionary initiatives of the Pietistic movement in continental Europe were represented by the Halle Mission in Denmark and the Moravians in Germany, and had a strong impact on Puritans in England as well as on later generations of Evangelical Christians.<sup>7</sup> In 1698, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) was founded and three years later, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG). Later in the eighteenth century the support given to the two societies declined and a new Anglican association called the Church Missionary Society (CMS) was formed in 1799.<sup>8</sup>

The voluntary principle<sup>9</sup> is seen within Evangelical mission movements firstly through the Anabaptist movement on the European continent and secondly among the Separatists, or Independents, in England. In both cases these groups valued freedom from the state Church and emphasised the autonomy of the local congregation.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, it is important to remember that there were many associations and societies using the voluntary approach for humanitarian purposes. One example is the anti-slavery societies of the nineteenth century.

Migration played an important role in the establishment of the Christian faith in North America. Although Separatist and Puritan immigrants’ primary motivation in colonising the new lands was not religious, many of them had left Europe owing to religious persecution and the lack of opportunities to prosper. The somewhat shallow conviction

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<sup>6</sup> Brackney, William, *Christian Voluntarism: Theology and Praxis*, 1997:53

<sup>7</sup> Neill, *Colonialism and Christian Missions*, 1966:76; Stanley, Brian, ed., *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment* 2001:31

<sup>8</sup> Brackney 1997:54-56

<sup>9</sup> The different dimensions of voluntarism will be further discussed in Chapter Three

<sup>10</sup> Latourette, Kenneth, *A History of Christianity*, 1975:815

of a religious vocation became evident among later generations of settlers who did not always have the same religious passion as their forefathers.<sup>11</sup>

The doctrine of 'Manifest Destiny' was present within these Protestant groups in their belief that they were chosen by God for the special purpose of extending the Kingdom of Heaven to the ends of the earth. For the Americans, belief in 'Manifest Destiny' became stronger during the last decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup> The term as such was introduced in the 1840s and related to the American drive to occupy the West, reaching as far as the Pacific coast. The concept soon took on global dimensions.<sup>13</sup>

The elements of voluntarism, migration and 'Manifest Destiny' are all important in the development of mission movements and clearly identifiable in many of the NSCs today.

## 1.2. The Modern Mission Movements

Before the 1790s, the concern of British Protestants for the spiritual condition of 'non-Europeans' was sporadic and geographically limited. Focus had been on the British colonies in North America and in India. Several factors contributed to the emergence of mission societies in England, inaugurating a new wave of mission efforts. One was access to new information about the world situation that enlarged perspectives of the global scenario, for example through Captain Cook's voyages to the South Seas.<sup>14</sup> Based on the narratives of Cook, William Carey wrote in 1792 '*An Enquiry into the*

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<sup>11</sup> Latourette, Kenneth S., *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, Vol 3. *Three Centuries of Advance*, 1947:191-192

<sup>12</sup> Anderson, Gerald, , 'American Protestants in Pursuit of Mission: 1886-1986', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 12/3, 1988:98

<sup>13</sup> Hogg, Richie, 'The Role of American Protestantism' in Beaver, Pierce, ed., *American Missions in Bicentennial Perspective*, 1977:367-368; Stanley, Brian, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions & British Imperialism in the nineteenth & twentieth centuries*, 1990:181

<sup>14</sup> Stanley 1990:55-58

*Obligations of Christians, to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*'. Carey was not the first to work towards the formation of a missionary society. Yet, "his work does represent a turning-point; it marks the entry of the English-speaking world on large scale into missionary enterprise".<sup>15</sup> Believing in the unity of humanity, Carey accepted the premise that the human is capable of responding to the Gospel, and added a second dimension to it, namely that it was necessary to use 'means' to conduct evangelisation effectively.<sup>16</sup> He also developed a vehicle for popular participation in the evangelisation of the world. In Carey, "a Baptist theology of voluntarism would thus reach its fullest expression".<sup>17</sup>

A second factor was the British colonial expansion to Asia and Africa that shaped missionary priorities, making use of the already established channels to the colonies and the protection supposedly guaranteed by British rulers in the foreign outposts. Walls affirms that "it is usual, and entirely correct, in describing the colonial period to point to the connexions between Christian missionaries and the colonial states".<sup>18</sup>

A third stimulus for the growing interest in mission in England came from Evangelical revivals, through the evangelistic activities of John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield. In the Anglican Church, a large number of informal societies emerged, focusing on bible study, prayer, frequent communion and service to prisoners, the poor, soldiers and sailors.<sup>19</sup> The main influence of the revivals on mission was the "rediscovery of the note of urgency in the biblical appeal for conversion".<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Neill, Stephen, *A History of Christian Mission*, 1982:261

<sup>16</sup> Carey, William, 'An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens', 1961:1

<sup>17</sup> Brackney 1997:47

<sup>18</sup> Walls 2002:44

<sup>19</sup> Latourette 1975:1022

<sup>20</sup> Van den Berg, Johannes, *Constrained by Jesus' Love: An Enquiry into the Motives of the Missionary Awakening in Great Britain in the Period between 1698 and 1815*, 1956:87

The result of these developments was the creation of a new form of mission structure, namely the missionary society. The Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) was founded in 1792, the London Missionary Society (LMS) in 1795 and the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1799. These societies were directly linked to church denominations although some, such as LMS, had the initial ambition of being ecumenical.<sup>21</sup> The purpose, therefore, was both to proclaim the Christian message and to establish church traditions in other cultures.

In North America the proliferation of mission societies started in 1796 with the formation of a society for the evangelisation of the North American Indians, followed by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1810. The inspiration for organising mission societies came partly from the UK, partly through specific developments among Evangelical churches in America. One of these was the Great Awakening that started in the 1740s and continued throughout the century. Another factor was the liberal trend in the American society that favoured non-governmental initiatives operating on a voluntary basis.

From the 1880s onwards, the fastest growth in the number of missionary societies occurred in the United States. America was the natural sphere of the voluntary society with apparently limitless space. In order to be effective and expansive the societies developed an entrepreneurial style in contrast to what was seen generally in Europe at that time and the UK in particular. This was primarily due to the different understanding of space. Europeans tended to think in the parish as the 'territory' while Americans were more diffused allowing room for individual entrepreneurship.<sup>22</sup> However, the

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<sup>21</sup> Neill 1966:92

<sup>22</sup> Walls 2000:229



entrepreneurial tendency in American mission movements was not new. Orlando Costas sees that bias already existing in missions to Latin America.<sup>23</sup>

The Enlightenment, with its optimistic view of the world and humanity, was of significant influence during the period when missionary societies were founded in the United States. It was particularly the expansionistic worldview, according to Bosch, that stretched people's horizon and "paved the way for a worldwide Christian missionary outreach".<sup>24</sup> Bosch sees such a close relation between Protestant mission and the ideas of the Enlightenment that he argues that "the entire modern missionary enterprise is, to a very real extent, a child of the Enlightenment".<sup>25</sup>

The Enlightenment brought also a new emphasis on the individual as an emancipated and autonomous person. Everybody could make its own decisions according to what he or she believed. This influenced the way people engaged in voluntary service, such as in mission, having freedom to take initiatives and volunteer for missionary activity that were not always linked to the established ecclesiastical structures.<sup>26</sup>

It was also a time of mass conversions to the evangelical faith.<sup>27</sup> Preachers such as Jonathan Edwards, Charles Finney and Dwight Moody were protagonists of the so-called 'Great Awakening' in the United States. In his urgency to preach the Gospel, Moody bypassed denominational and local church authority, constructing a para-church movement based upon financial resources from businessmen.<sup>28</sup> The outcomes of mass

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<sup>23</sup> Costas, Orlando, *Christ Outside the Gate: Mission Beyond Christendom*, 1984:58

<sup>24</sup> Bosch, David, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 1993:274

<sup>25</sup> Bosch 1993:274. See also Stanley, Brian, *Christian Mission and the Enlightenment*, 2001:14,15

<sup>26</sup> Bosch 1993:273, 280

<sup>27</sup> Latourette 1975:1231

<sup>28</sup> Frankl, Razelle, *Televangelism*, 1987:3. Frankl sees in Finney and Moody the embryonic birth of the electric church of today. The electric church refers to "commercial religious programs produced for television and radio by evangelical and usually fundamentalist organizations"

communication were not only the creation of new ways to propagate the faith but also of new movements working alongside the traditional church structures; the emergence of a diversity of denominations, many of them with Pentecostal emphasis, was a direct result of the revivals.<sup>29</sup>

### 1.3. Faith Missions and Mission Movements in the Twentieth Century

Many of the newer type of Evangelical mission agencies belonged to the category usually referred to as 'faith missions'.<sup>30</sup> The pioneer and prototype of all these societies was the China Inland Mission, founded in 1865 by Hudson Taylor. Most inter-denominational agencies trace the origin of their principles back to Taylor.<sup>31</sup> Gerald Anderson believes that the main motives for founding faith missions in the late nineteenth century were not theological or sectarian but practical, decentralising missionary responsibility for greater efficiency.<sup>32</sup> The recruitment of professionals to work as volunteers in their area of expertise radically altered the view of who could become a missionary and what kind of pre-field training was required.<sup>33</sup>

The involvement of women in mission societies was another important aspect of the development of the mission enterprise in the late nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup> Student movements played also an important role in the formation of mission societies, for example the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions (SVM) (formed in 1886), the Navigators (1933), Youth for Christ (1930) and Campus Crusade for Christ

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<sup>29</sup> Brackney 1997:71

<sup>30</sup> These mission organisations were called 'faith missions' because missionaries went out without a guarantee of financial support, living only 'by faith', i.e. on the belief that God would provide the needed resources

<sup>31</sup> Bosch 1993:332-333; Fiedler, Klaus, *The Story of Faith Missions*, 1994:11

<sup>32</sup> Anderson 1988:99

<sup>33</sup> Walls 2002:230

<sup>34</sup> Brackney 1997:76

(1951). The watchword of SVM was ‘the evangelisation of the world in this generation’, and thousands of university graduates were recruited for service by the mission boards of Canada, the United States and Great Britain. The efflorescence of the student movements coincided with the increasing influence of America around the globe.<sup>35</sup> One important outcome of the student movements was a new concept of the role of the missionary, defined until then as a clerical position. The Edinburgh Conference of 1910 is an important milestone in the development of the missiological trends among both Evangelicals and Ecumenicals.<sup>36</sup> The conference represented the enthusiasm for mission that dominated the missionary enterprise at the time.<sup>37</sup>

In the UK the number of mission agencies had not grown as rapidly as in the United States, but the process of creating new mission-focused societies continued during the last century. Some of the new associations were missionary sending missions; others were agencies for technical and logistic support to mission movements and Christian relief organisations. According to the UK Christian Handbook of 2004, there are 105 Evangelical mission organisations in the UK, of which seventy-six are considered inter-denominational and twenty-nine denominational. The founding of these organisations spans a period of 300 years. Graph 1 illustrates the growth of mission movements in the UK, based upon the year each organisation was founded and taking into account whether they are directly linked to a Church structure or not, as denominational and inter-denominational missions.<sup>38</sup>

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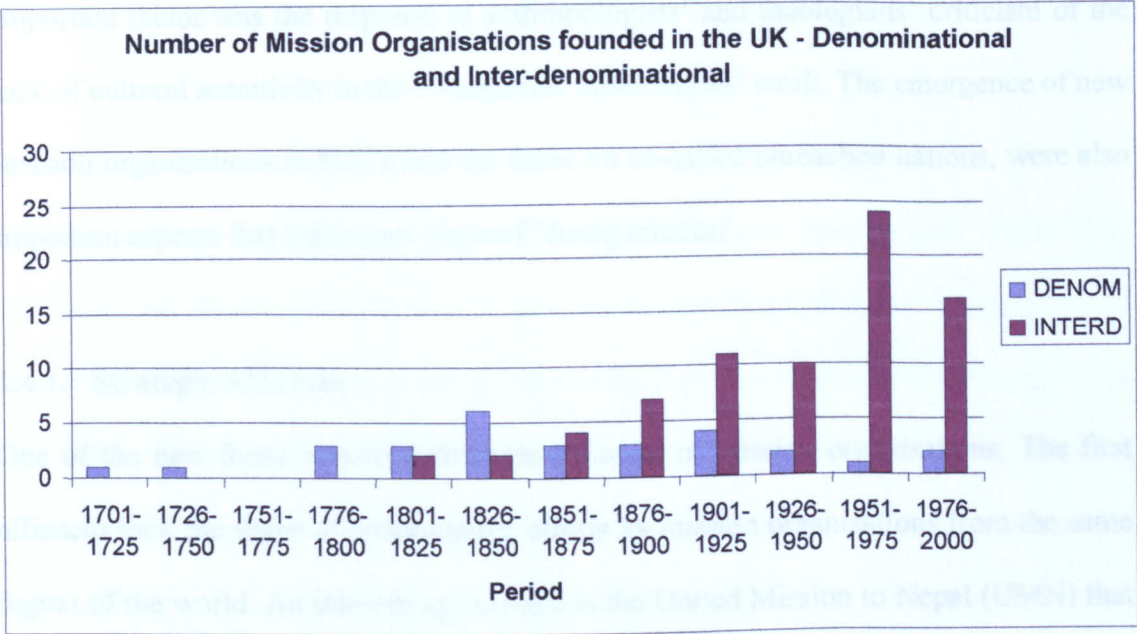
<sup>35</sup> Bowden, Henry, ‘An Overview of Cultural Factors in the American Protestant Missionary Enterprise’ in Beaver 1977:51

<sup>36</sup> Hedlund, Roger, *Roots of the Great Debate in Mission*, 1981:29

<sup>37</sup> Gairdner, W.H.T., “*Edinburgh 1910*” – *An Account & Interpretation of the World Missionary Conference*, 1910:9; Bosch 1993:338; Hedlund 1981:39

<sup>38</sup> Wraight, Heather, ed., *UK Christian Handbook 2004/2005*, 2004:279-293

Graph 1 – Number of Mission Organisations founded in the UK 1700 to 2000



The graph shows also that during the history of British Protestant and Evangelical churches, there have been three main waves of growth in the founding of mission organisations. The first was sparked by the revival movements and Carey’s *‘Enquiry’* around the beginning of the nineteenth century. The second wave came a hundred years later, strongly influenced by the faith movements. The third started after the Second World War and was boosted by the focus on the so-called ‘unreached people groups’. It is interesting to notice that until 1850 the main type of mission structure was the denominational missionary society. With the ‘faith’ movements in the second half of the nineteenth century inter-denominational agencies became the preferred model and this tendency continued during the twentieth century.

1.4. Developments post-Second World War

New forms of missionary organisations appeared after the Second World War as a result of various factors. One was the post-war depression in terms of breaking down the

belief in Western cultural superiority and the financial crisis in Europe. Another important factor was the response to anthropologists' and theologians' criticism of the lack of cultural sensitivity in the Evangelical missionaries' work. The emergence of new mission organisations in NSCs and the focus on so-called unreached nations, were also important aspects that led to new ways of 'doing mission'.

#### **1.4.1. Strategic Alliances**

One of the new forms involved strategic alliances of mission organisations. The first alliances took the shape of collaborative efforts by mission organisations from the same region of the world. An interesting example is the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) that was founded in 1953, gathering mission organisations from Europe and North America and entering Nepal in the same year. This model has been used in other countries, particularly where governments have had restrictions against the establishment of foreign organisations.

A second sort of strategic alliance has been the co-operation between a Western mission organisation and mission agencies and denominational mission boards in a specific country. WEC International exemplifies this kind of alliance. Instead of setting up their own office in Brazil, WEC missionaries worked alongside Brazilian leaders to create a sending organisation, as a result of the collaboration between different denominations and national organisations.

A third category of strategic alliance became common in the 1990s with the focus on so-called 'unreached people groups', changing the target from political nations to ethnic groups. Strategic alliances were formed in order to convene the mission movements that

had ‘adopted’ a specific ethnic group and to organise the investments of people and resources in an efficient way.

#### **1.4.2. International Agencies**

International mission agencies are also a product of the post-second World War developments. Similar to multinational companies, international mission organisations seek to establish centres around the world, facilitating the recruitment of personnel and providing culturally adequate support for the mission candidates. After a period of implementation (under the guidance of an international leader) the leadership of the national base is handed over to a local person. Examples of this kind of international agency are Operation Mobilisation (OM), Youth with a Mission (YWAM) and African Inland Mission (AIM).

Today, globalisation of Evangelical mission movements has also reached the specific denominations, and collaboration shapes the way in which churches in OSCs and in NSCs work together internationally. Frequently this partnership takes the form of mixed teams of missionaries where active involvement of personnel from NSCs is combined with the provision of financial resources by OSCs.

#### **1.4.3. Local Churches**

Local churches have always played an important role in Evangelical missions as primary supporters of the missionary efforts. An increasingly common model, nonetheless, is that of independent congregations and mega-churches forming their own sending structures. In some cases, due to the size of the congregation and less bureaucratic administration, their resources are basically equivalent to those of a denomination or a mission agency. This has frequently boosted the proliferation of

denominationalism, since independent churches tend to form their own denominations when starting extensions in other countries. However, the missionary enterprise of mega-churches is a new phenomenon in Evangelical circles, particularly in some of the richer countries such as the United States, Canada, South Korea and the UK.

### **1.5. A New Epoch for Western Missions**

The description and analysis of Western mission movements have, so far, focused primarily on developments up to the 1960s, when Evangelical churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America had already been established through missionary work and many of them had gone through a process of independency.<sup>39</sup> These churches owe many of their characteristics to Western missions, hence the importance of an understanding and an evaluation of the mission history from the seventeenth century onwards. Nevertheless, significant changes have occurred among Evangelicals in later decades and a new phase in the history of mission movements started after the Second World War. This new phase was influenced by factors such as emancipation of former colonies, financial constraints after the war, the spread of Communism,<sup>40</sup> an increasing demand for contextualisation in mission and growth of Christian churches in traditional mission fields. The wave of mission initiatives that came out of these changes in conditions and attitude have created new paradigms, and have been decisive in the way both OSCs and NSCs have perceived their missionary task. Some of the characteristics of these new paradigms are:

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<sup>39</sup> This development is described in different ways, such as in Jenkins 2002:55-56

<sup>40</sup> The challenge of Communism on Evangelical missions is commented, among others, by Arthur Glasser in Glasser, Arthur, 'Evangelical Missions' in Phillips, James and Robert Coote, *Toward the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in Christian Mission*, 1993:9

- Emphasis on the holistic Gospel, urging Christian churches to engage in both proclamation and in social action. The liberation theologies of younger churches, especially in Latin America, have played an important role in the rediscovery of the integral mission of the church;<sup>41</sup>
- Rapid growth of the churches, mainly Pentecostal, in some countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America with revival movements from the 1960s onwards;<sup>42</sup>
- Globalised Charismatic movements challenging the traditional ecclesiastical structures and internationalising the Church;<sup>43</sup>
- A decline in some mission movements in Europe, owing to secularisation, expensive mission structures and criticism of traditional missionary methods;<sup>44</sup>
- A tendency to privatise mission movements, owing to the emergence of many new organisations based on individual initiatives or on local churches;<sup>45</sup> and,
- An increasing number of mission movements from the former mission fields.<sup>46</sup>

## 1.6. Summary

This brief overview of Evangelical Church and Mission History, exemplifies the intrinsic impetus for expansion of the faith that characterises Christianity. Through various types of sending structures, missionaries have been working in order to establish churches and make converts in other cultures since the beginning of the Christian era.

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<sup>41</sup> See further discussion in Chapter Five, point 5.1.2, based on the case studies in Brazil and the development of the theology of mission in Latin America

<sup>42</sup> Ma, Julia and Allan Anderson, 'Pentecostals (Renewalists) 1910-2010', in Johnson, Todd and Kenneth Ross, eds., *Atlas of Global Christianity*, 2009:101

<sup>43</sup> Example of this in Ghana is discussed in Anim, Emmanuel, *Who Wants to be a Millionaire? An Analysis of Prosperity Teaching in the Charismatic Ministries (Churches) in Ghana and its Wider Impact*, 2003:282-287

<sup>44</sup> On the 'dechristianisation' of Europe, see Jenkins 2002:94-96. The declining number of missionaries is verified for example in the Scandinavian countries. One example is Sweden that had almost 2,000 cross-cultural missionaries in 1983 and reported 875 missionaries in 2007. See statistics at [www.missioncouncil.se](http://www.missioncouncil.se)

<sup>45</sup> This is further discussed in Chapter Seven under point 3.2, based on case studies in the NSCs

<sup>46</sup> See statistics on number of missionaries from NSCs in Chapter One



The expansion has often favoured the use of colonial systems and established trade routes. The translation of the Christian message and ecclesiastical traditions during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was driven by various motives, frequently involving an imperialistic sense of superiority and ‘Manifest Destiny’ by the Western missions. Voluntarism has also been a characteristic of the majority of the missionary efforts. Mission from the ‘West to the Rest’ has resulted in growing Evangelical churches in the Global South where assimilation and contextualisation of Christianity is still an ongoing process.

## **2. Motives for Mission**

There were a variety of motives behind the missionary effort of translating the Gospel and church models to other cultures and some have already been mentioned in this chapter. Nevertheless, it is helpful to classify them in order to be able to compare the motivations behind earlier phases of missionary work with those of today in NSCs.

There seems to be an intrinsic blend of different motives and reasons for engaging in missionary work. Some of these are undeclared and may even be unconscious. Others are frequently repeated in the history of the Christian Church, though often linked to the particular political, economic, philosophical, sociological and religious milieu of respective countries and historical epochs.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Comby, Jean, *How to Understand the History of Christian Mission*, 1996:69-70

These motives can be divided in two categories, explicit motives and implicit motives.<sup>48</sup> Explicit motivation is based primarily, but not exclusively, on religious faith, using an argument rooted in a specific Biblical hermeneutic, a definition of the role of the Christian Church and the understanding of a personal commitment to these biblical and ecclesiastical values and dogmas. Here the theology and tradition of a particular church stream are important as well as the subjective experience in a spiritual realm. The most common explicit motives are:

- Love and Compassion;
- Obedience to the Biblical Mandate;
- Conversion to the Christian Faith;
- Expansion of the Church;
- Eschatological Urgency;
- Humanitarian Concern and Education; and,
- Trade and Cultural Exchange

Implicit motivation is related to external factors in society that lead a person or community to act in a specific way but are not openly declared and sometimes not even noticed. Aspects such as a nation's sense of its ultimate purpose and *raison d'être*, moral standards, religious climate, philosophical worldview, the encounter with other cultures and the global trends that are exerted on local and national communities, are all important in determining this area of motivation. The most common implicit motives are:

- Imperialism and Colonialism;
- 'Manifest Destiny';

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<sup>48</sup> This classification of motives is based on Verkuyl, J., *Contemporary Missiology*, 1978:163-175

- Romantic Feelings and Adventure;
- Citizenship in the Global Village; and,
- International Entrepreneurialism

As in the case of mission movements from OSCs, both explicit and implicit reasons for engaging in mission work exist in NSCs and these should be considered. According to data collected from the countries studied, religious arguments are often the ones most easily declared and identified. In exceptional cases, socio-political reasons are mentioned and, in those cases, the mission leaders have evaluated in greater depth the influence from the surrounding society. At the same time, there are no ‘watertight’ divisions between the two types of motives. Even in secular states religious ideas permeate a society just as there are socio-political elements within an ecclesiastical community.

### **3. Criteria of Success in the Missionary Enterprise**

The most common criteria for determining the success of missionary activity are related to the number of converts and of churches established. Statistics have played an important role in determining the growth rates of Christianity compared to other world religions.

#### **3.1. Measuring the Influence of Christianity**

Latourette proposed a threefold means to measure the real influence of Christianity. The first is the spread of the Christian profession in particular areas. The second is the

number and strength of new movements owing their origin to Christianity. The third is the effect of Christianity on humankind as a whole.<sup>49</sup> Walls is correct to affirm that none of these criteria is sufficient to really evaluate the advance of Christianity.<sup>50</sup> Complex issues such as conversion, cultural influence, contextualisation and autochthonous forms of worship make any attempt to measure success in numbers a risky venture. Nevertheless, the mission movements need some kind of mechanism for determining the level of success in their work and those three, with smaller variations, have been the ones used most frequently.

### **3.2. The “Three-Self” Formula**

The ‘three-self’ formula has historically provided another way of evaluating the development of missionary work. Good results are achieved when the national church gains autonomy in governance, financial support and propagation. These criteria have also been applied to the strategy of newer mission movements. There are, however, objections to the ‘three-self’ principle, especially in two areas. Firstly, the formula is not radical enough and has not considered the crucial element in church growth of doing its own theology. The argument is that as long as theology is just an imported product from the traditional sending churches, the relevance of the Christian message will be seriously jeopardised. Secondly, the ultimate goal of reaching complete independence in leadership, finances and expansion has been used as an excuse for an almost unlimited prolongation of a missionary presence on the mission field.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Quoted by Walls 2002:9

<sup>50</sup> Walls 2002:11-26

<sup>51</sup> For further discussion on the ‘Three-self formula’, see Terry, John Mark, ‘Indigenous Churches’ in Moreau, A. Scott, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, 2000:483-485

### 3.3. Conversion to Christianity

The key way of assessing the results of missionary work has been to consider the number of converts. Based on the Great Commission 'to go and make disciples of all nations', the conversion of people to the Christian faith is the goal par excellence of Evangelical mission movements. The crucial issue, however, is how conversion is defined and the means used to achieve this goal. Conversion can be seen as acceptance of the validity of Christian teachings and a conscious conviction of the need to turn to God through Jesus Christ. It could also mean other things, such as the "affiliation to a church, an explicit claim to Christian identity, or merely a borrowing of religious elements associated with Christian tradition".<sup>52</sup> Jordan defines conversion in terms of accepting a new religious system through a self-conscious change.<sup>53</sup>

Conversion can also be defined as a change in values, beliefs, identities, and "in the universe of discourse of individuals evidenced by their new styles of speech and reasoning".<sup>54</sup> Paul Hiebert sees the first signs of conversion as a change of behaviour, since "it is hard to measure a person's beliefs and concepts".<sup>55</sup> At a certain moment a process starts (compared by Hiebert to a centred set) that focuses on a new relationship with God and thus brings the converted step by step to an understanding of what Christian faith is about and of a change of worldview.<sup>56</sup> Hiebert's understanding of conversion is certainly very common in Evangelical circles such as those considered in this study.

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<sup>52</sup> Wood, Peter, 'Afterword: Boundaries and Horizons' in Hefner, Robert, ed., *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation*, 1993:319-320

<sup>53</sup> Jordan, David, 'The Glyphomancy Factor: Observations on Chinese Conversion' in Hefner 1993:285

<sup>54</sup> Merrill, William, 'Conversion in Northern Mexico' in Hefner 1993:152-153

<sup>55</sup> Hiebert, Paul, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 1994:110

<sup>56</sup> Hiebert 1994:110-136

Based on a case study among the Maisin in Papua New Guinea, Barker suggests that two modalities of conversion have been present, the 'external conversion' and the 'internal conversion'. The former is "the process that reforms local ways according to imported values and orientations". The second modality modifies the pre-existent traditional elements in exchanges and rituals and has influence at a deeper cultural and religious level.<sup>57</sup> From a sociological and anthropological point of view, these two levels of change seem to give a good definition of the conversion process.

The conversion to Christianity of the Roman Empire under the Emperor Constantine set a pattern for conversion through top-down imposition and, in many cases, defeat in war. The mass conversions performed by the Catholic explorers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries followed the same model, creating the confusion of Christendom and Christianity and the close relation between Church and State, known as *Corpus Christianum*.<sup>58</sup> The emphasis on the conversion of individuals was characteristic of the Pietistic and Puritan movements as well as the Evangelical mission movements that emerged later. However, even among these movements there have been many variations in the ways in which people have been encouraged to convert. The use of political influence, financial strength and advanced technology has often put such a pressure on people that they had no alternative other than to accept, or at least appear to accept, the Christian faith. A common way of attracting people into church has been through social work.<sup>59</sup>

The acceptability of the Christian faith has varied greatly during the course of history and among different cultures. An intriguing question is why the rate of conversions is

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<sup>57</sup> Barker, John, "We are Eklesia": Papua New Guinea' in Hefner 1993:222-223

<sup>58</sup> Stanley 2001:47

<sup>59</sup> Sunder Raj, Ebe, *The Confusion Called Conversion*, 1998:26-27

higher in some places than others. Christianity has very successfully been transformed into a world religion with global magnitude; however at the same time, the acceptance of the Christian message has been inconsistent. There seems to be a relation between the rejection of new religions and the rationalised and universalistic beliefs of a culture.<sup>60</sup> When Christianity encounters cultures with a more dogmatised and rationalistic religious system and with a global and universal perspective regarding the application, the tendency is for the Christian message to be refuted.<sup>61</sup>

A methodological problem in assessing the success of missionary work concerns where the data come from, and who defines the meaning of conversion.<sup>62</sup> This can be true in relation to tribal groups and cultures where only oral tradition exists. Today, on the other hand, there is much information about the conversion process from nationals in former mission fields. It could be alleged that they have only acquired the Christian terminology, giving an alternative meaning to it. Although this may be true, this deduction underestimates the capacity of those who claim to understand what Christianity is about.

These criteria for evaluating the success of the missionary enterprise are also seen in different ways and with slightly variations in mission movements in NSCs. A comparative analysis in Chapter Seven demonstrates how these translated elements for measuring success were assimilated by newer churches and how they influenced the behaviour of emergent mission structures in the self-missionising process that has taken place.

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<sup>60</sup> Keyes, Charles, 'Why the Thai are not Christians' in Hefner 1993:276

<sup>61</sup> Keyes 1993:277

<sup>62</sup> Merrill 1993:153

#### 4. Colonialism and Contextualisation

Possibly the most controversial issue related to the Western mission enterprise and the translatability principle is the association with Colonialism and Imperialism.<sup>63</sup> In the nineteenth century, the link between colonialism and mission became clearer and it was customary for British missionaries to work in British colonies, German missionaries in German colonies, and so on. Working as missionaries in a nation ruled by their homeland, it was natural that they were seen as representatives of that colonial power.

There was a broad consensus as to the arguments for maintaining the colonial rule. According to Webster, in the case of India there were three interrelated elements to this consensus. The first was the conviction that British rule was a good, even providential, thing. The second was a sense of racial superiority, including superior values, customs and institutions. The third was the belief that the British were guardians or trustees of the people of India.<sup>64</sup> The same elements can be found in British relationship with other countries as well as in the attitude of other colonial powers towards their respective colonies. The period from 1880 to 1920 has been described as the heyday of imperialism involving a strong expansion of the Euro-American societies.<sup>65</sup>

It was difficult for the missionaries not to be affected by the imperialistic views that dominated, and the assumption that what was best for the West was also the best for the Rest.<sup>66</sup> The frequent confusion in the history of mission between Christianisation, the spreading of the Christian message, and civilisation, the attempt to impose new values upon a receiving culture, has been one of the greatest challenges for missionary work.

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<sup>63</sup> Neill 1966:11-12

<sup>64</sup> Webster, John, 'British Missions in India' in Christensen et al. 1982:38

<sup>65</sup> Christensen et al. 1982:7; Bosch 1993:307

<sup>66</sup> Neill 1966:107-108



Stanley mentions four assumptions that determined the way missionaries acted. The first was the belief that the cultures they were penetrating were in no sense religiously neutral and were under the control of evil forces. The second was the supposition that nineteenth century Britain constituted a model of Christian culture and society. The third was the faith in human progress that was one of the legacies of the Enlightenment to Christian thought. The fourth was the pragmatic conclusion that the combination of Christianisation and civilisation worked out well.<sup>67</sup>

It was not until the end of the high imperial era that a serious questioning of the colonial system took place in Britain. The second decade of the twentieth century witnessed a radical change in the perception of Western imperialism. Amongst others, the leaders of student movements began to criticise the racist attitudes and exploitive policies of the West. The First World War reinforced the sense of a needed humility concerning Western claims of moral supremacy.<sup>68</sup>

Missionary training from the 1960s onwards had to deal with increasing criticism of the paternalism and cultural insensitivity of the Evangelical mission enterprise. This critique came mainly from anthropologists and theologians inside and outside Evangelical circles. Harvie Conn describes the process of a 'trialogue' between missiologists, theologians and anthropologists as a positive development in more recent years, creating a better understanding of each other and changing the missionary approach to cultural issues.<sup>69</sup> Courses in Missiology have become essential for Western missions and social and cultural anthropology are now integrated into the curriculum.

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<sup>67</sup> Stanley 1990:161-162

<sup>68</sup> Phillips, Clifton, 'Changing Attitudes in the Student Volunteer Movement of Great Britain and North America, 1886-1928' in Christensen et al. 1982:136-137

<sup>69</sup> Conn, Harvie, *Eternal Word and Changing Worlds: Theology, Anthropology, and Mission in Triologue*, 1984:130

The discussion about contextualisation in mission is an on-going healthy result of this critical assessment.

Although there is much self-criticism within mission movements in the West today, the main criticism comes from Africa, Asia and Latin America, regions where colonial powers exerted their influence from the sixteenth century onwards. The issue challenges the ability to keep a balance between an objective understanding of the historical situation and the understandable anti-West feelings in many of these ex-colonies. The reaction to missionary work varied significantly, however. In some cases there was a passive acceptance of a missionary presence, while in other places they were met by strong antagonism. Asia was the main focus for discussion on mission and imperialism until the 1960s. Since then the African continent has been the primary centre for the controversy. In India the first defenders of independence emerged in the late nineteenth century but it took more than fifty years to achieve political freedom. In Africa the nationalistic process started later than in Asia; however the decolonisation was more rapid.<sup>70</sup>

It is interesting that many of the first generation African nationalist leaders were products of the Catholic and Protestant schools and theological colleges. It was a combination of factors that gave birth to the nationalistic movements in which education played an essential part. Again comparing Africa and India, Stanley says that

What Britain failed to foresee was that her tardy embarkation on a programme of full-blooded imperial intervention in Africa would have precisely the same effect as it had a generation earlier in India: the combination of economic exploitation, Western

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<sup>70</sup> Stanley 1990:16

education and Christian idealism proved just the right mixture to bring the developing embryo of nationalist politics to birth.<sup>71</sup>

Looking at some of the criticism made by the former colonies, the first point that must be considered is the fact that the history of missionary work in the Global South has been written primarily by Westerners and from the sending nations' perspective. As a result, evaluation of mission has not always been fair to the sentiments and understanding of the receiving peoples. Representing an Indian viewpoint, Dharmaraj argues that

The mission historians of the nineteenth century devalued the social, religious and cultural values of the colonised East and wrote history from European imperialistic, colonial and political perspectives. As a result their written documents must be re-examined from post-colonial Indian perspectives.<sup>72</sup>

The educational system introduced by the missionaries has also been seen as a way of subduing the native population and a necessary complement to conversion. The goal was not only to see people converted but also 'civilised' according to a Western point of view.<sup>73</sup> Hrangkhuma is also critical of missionary endeavours in India and emphasises what he calls "the missionaries' failure to incarnate".<sup>74</sup>

Another important outcome of the influence of colonialism on mission was the creation of the so-called 'comity system' dividing geographical territories among the mission organisations and thus hindering competition for converts. In spite of losing its importance after First World War, the comity system was a forerunner of the ecumenical movement and moved the sending churches towards union and co-

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<sup>71</sup> Stanley 1990:50

<sup>72</sup> Dharmaraj, Jacob, *Colonialism and Christian Mission: Postcolonial Reflections*, 1999:2

<sup>73</sup> Stanley 1990:75

<sup>74</sup> Hrangkhuma, F., *Christianity in India: Search for Liberation and Identity*, 1998:318-322

operation, especially in foreign countries. At the same time, it also brought problems and divided the converts on parochial, denominational and geographical grounds, creating unnecessary barriers between the churches that were then displayed on the mission fields.

The decision as to which regions and nations to evangelise was also influenced by the colonial system. The conclusion of the Edinburgh Conference of 1910 regarding this question demonstrates the close relationship between colonialism and mission. South America Roman Catholic countries were excluded from the list of the nations to be reached by Protestant missions.<sup>75</sup> The focus was on the colonised lands. One reason for this could have been the way the delegations were formed. Asian delegates were not allowed to represent their churches, but only admitted as delegates of British and American missions to the Conference.<sup>76</sup>

An example of 'imperialistic spirit' directly affecting the development of national churches occurred during the second half of the nineteenth century when communities created as a result of mission work sought their independence and the missionaries tended to strengthen their control.<sup>77</sup> One suggested antidote to the negative influence of such paternalistic and imperialistic tendencies was the 'three-self' formula. Self-support secured financial independency from the richer missions and churches of North America and Europe. Self-government concluded the process of nationalisation of the ecclesiastical leadership. Self-propagation provided initiatives for advancement for national churches.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Unhappy with the results of the Edinburgh conference, Evangelicals convened a new conference in 1916 in Panama where the need for evangelising Latin America was affirmed

<sup>76</sup> Dharmaraj 1999:110-113; Hedlund 1981:31

<sup>77</sup> Neill 1966:417

<sup>78</sup> Kirk, Andrew, *What is Mission?: Theological Implications*, 1999:90

The process of 'doing theology' has also met with the disapproval of leaders from the former colonies. As part of the colonial mentality, the Christian 'package' included both theory and praxis. The dogmatic content of the Christian faith was a 'final product' that could be added to only by those who had the 'copyright'. In the same way, the practical interpretation and application of these dogmas was required to follow the customs and values of the traditional sending countries. Latin American theologians such as Orlando Costas, René Padilla and Samuel Escobar have suggested the relevance of a "critical missiology from the periphery" and have proposed the need for a fourth 'self' principle, self-theologising.<sup>79</sup> Affirming the need for a contextualised theology in Latin America, Núñez recognises that

... we have to admit that after more than one hundred years of evangelical presence in Latin America we have limited ourselves to translating theology instead of doing theology.<sup>80</sup>

Not all Christian leaders in the West advocated the maintenance of European hegemony over the colonies and the emerging national churches. Max Warren, former General Secretary of the CMS, "insisted that the contemporary (1964-65) nationalist revolution in Asia and Africa demanded an end to racially superior attitudes amongst Western missionaries and called for a sympathetic Christian response".<sup>81</sup> In many cases the kind of leadership that replaced the foreign missionaries was no more democratic than the former one. A similar situation arose concerning the new government of several countries. As early as 1963, the churches were objecting to aspects of the 'cult' of President Nkrumah in Ghana, to take one example.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Escobar, Samuel, 'Evangelical Missiology Peering into the Future', in Taylor 2000:112

<sup>80</sup> Núñez, Emilio and Taylor, William, *Crisis and Hope in Latin America*, 1996:360

<sup>81</sup> Stanley 1990:18

<sup>82</sup> Stanley 1990:19

The links between mission and colonialism are, in many ways, understandable. India, for example, was initially important to Britain as a centre for British trading activity throughout Asia. The military dimension became increasingly important in maintaining hegemony on the Asian seas. However, humanitarian objectives were also crucial for the British and should not be dismissed; they played an important role in the establishment and defence of the British Empire in Asia and Africa.<sup>83</sup>

## Conclusion

This brief historical review of Christian mission movements shows the evolution of organisational models for missionary activity. When there has been sufficient motivation for cross-cultural outreach, initiatives have been taken to provide the churches with sending structures that make missionary work possible. These mission structures tended to follow the associational pattern of the surrounding society, emulating in particular models of voluntary societies. The initiatives of founding mission organisations often came from individuals outside the established hierarchy of the churches, stretching traditional views and patterns.

The dominant ideologies and worldviews in each epoch had a strong influence on the mission movements as well. Mission is therefore not an isolated phenomenon in the Western society but closely related to political and religious developments. The *Corpus Christianum* concept played an important role in the earlier stages of Catholic and Protestant mission enterprise. Its legacy is seen later in the idea of 'Manifest Destiny', still with the understanding of a special vocation for establishing Christendom

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<sup>83</sup> Stanley 1990:58

throughout the world. The connections to colonialism and imperialism are also important factors that partially explain the directions taken by mission movements and their actions in some regions. A mixture of explicit and implicit motives has encouraged mission initiatives in OSCs, although the official stated motivation does not often allude to less altruistic factors.

This analysis indicates that the translatability principle has been active during the centuries of Western mission towards the 'Rest' of the world. In an effort to translate the Biblical message, missionaries have also transmitted and established the church models and Christian practices seen as part of a complete expression of the faith. These elements have been, for the most, assimilated by the nationals and, by and large, contextualised to the local cultures. The consequence is that the Global South presents today both church and mission organisations that are replicas of Western models and those that have developed autochthonous characteristics. Mission movements in NSCs emerge in this setting, showing the same duplicity in their organisational models and in their missionary practice.

Not surprisingly internal, external and international factors have influenced the development of Western mission movements. Whereas these are comparable to the factors seen in NSCs in the last forty years, they are also distinctive for their time. Some of these factors are:

#### Internal Factors:

- A strong emphasis on preaching the Gospel and encouraging people to convert to the Christian faith as a result of revival movements;

- A theology of the unity of humanity, as seen in William Carey, believing in the translatability of the Christian message and urging for the expansion of Christianity to other cultures;
- A combination of bible-based and humanitarian motives, impelling the Evangelical churches to actively engage in mission; and,
- The emergence of courageous and innovative leadership, creating sending structures for cross-cultural mission, such as the 'faith mission' model.

#### External and International Factors:

- The colonial system, favouring information about other nations, possibilities for travel and providing opportunities for support and permanence in the colonies;
- The 'Manifest Destiny' mentality in some of the countries in the West, reinforcing the idea of 'saving the lost' and civilising the 'primitive' cultures;
- The Enlightenment's emphasis on the possibility of solving all human problems and giving a new impetus to worldwide enterprises;
- The development of voluntary associations, offering the mission initiatives a model for organising themselves and a viable tool for sending people abroad; and
- The immigration of Christians to other nations, establishing bases for missionary work by their home churches.

The new epoch in Western missions is partly a result of the growth of Christianity in the non-Western world, challenging traditional paradigms of mission. The globalisation of the mission enterprise has led to a great variety of mission models seen today. The next chapter deals with the voluntary nature of the mission movements, the main structural form for the modern mission enterprise and for the self-missionising process in NSCs.



## CHAPTER 3

# MISSION MOVEMENTS AS VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

## Introduction

Mission movements related to Christian churches are, in many ways, defined by the principle of voluntarism, deriving their voluntary ethos from organisational prototypes in contemporary society and from ecclesiastical models, particularly those seen in the non-conformist churches and adopted in free-church traditions. Mission organisations are consequently 'children of their time', reflecting the attitudes and values that dominate the environment around them and choosing structures following the paradigms of their age. In other words, the presence of voluntary associations in society provides an important model for mission movements and is one of the decisive external factors for the way in which those movements develop. Since voluntarism has such an important part to play within the organisational structure of mission movements, it merits particular attention within this study.

Voluntarism related to mission movements could be defined according to three dimensions. Firstly, it refers to the non-governmental type of organisation as part of civil society.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, it denotes the free-will character of the associations, build upon the participation of people by their own choice, accepting the organisational rules.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The *Cassell Concise English Dictionary* defines 'voluntary' as "a supporter of the principle that the Church should be independent of the State and maintained by voluntary effort". Kirkpatrick, Betty, ed., *Cassell Concise English Dictionary*, 1994:1473; Fairchild, Henry, ed., *Dictionary of Sociology and Related Sciences*, 1970:17

<sup>2</sup> Hertz, Karl, 'The Nature of Voluntary Associations', in Robertson, ed., *Voluntary Associations: A Study of Groups in Free Societies*, 1966:23-24

Thirdly, it has to do with the way these organisations operate, based on free financial donations and on volunteers who offer themselves to work in mission, often giving their time without expecting payment or a guaranteed salary.<sup>3</sup>

The objective of this chapter is consequently to provide a background to the subject of voluntary associations, considering the organisational structures and different types of associations existing in Evangelical churches. The associations will also be considered from a point of view of their importance as structural frameworks for Evangelical mission movements. The study of mission movements as voluntary associations is relevant because the voluntary principle is clearly identified in the growing missionary enterprise from Africa, Asia and Latin America, as shown in later discussions. The self-missionising churches in NSCs have thus given continuity to the voluntary principle seen in OSCs although the forms and the application of the principle may vary significantly.

Voluntarism has played an important role in the development of mission structures in both Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions. However, not much attention has been given to voluntary societies when assessing the missionary work carried out over the last two centuries. Walls says that

It is surprising how little attention the voluntary society has attracted in studies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Church, considering the immense impact on Western Christianity and the transformation of world Christianity that (through its special form in the missionary society) it helped to effect. The origins of the modern voluntary society lie in the last years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It was put to new uses in the 18<sup>th</sup> and in the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and

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<sup>3</sup> As seen in the case studies presented in Chapters Four, Five and Six. The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* defines 'voluntary organisation' as "an organization that is organized or supported by people who give their money, services, etc because they want to and without expecting reward". *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, 1995:1600

developed new ways of influencing, supplementing, and bypassing the life of Church and State alike.<sup>4</sup>

In the translation of Christianity into the so-called 'mission fields', the concept of voluntarism has followed the establishment of Evangelical churches, influencing the receiving contexts and seen as a main characteristic in mission movements in NSCs.

## 1. The Voluntary Principle

The principle of voluntarism is closely linked to the ideal of a democratic society where people are free to choose with whom and with what they desire to associate. A pluralistic approach to organisations, as seen in democratic societies, requires a diversity of independent voluntary and non-government associations as means of protection for individuals from an authoritarian dominance of the state.<sup>5</sup> This principle of liberty has been highly valued in the Western mindset owing to an Enlightenment spirit of enterprise and of initiative, based on optimistic views of the world and of humanity. The social and political egalitarianism in emerging democracies reinforced an ideology of individual freedom leading to the so-called 'third sector' in society, formed primarily by voluntary organisations.<sup>6</sup>

Nonetheless, the existence of voluntary associations per se does not guarantee complete freedom of choice. Participation in an association demands acceptance of rules to which members are bound and that hinder the exercise of unrestricted preferences. In addition,

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<sup>4</sup> Walls 2000:241

<sup>5</sup> Smith, Constance and Anne Freedman, *Voluntary Associations – Perspectives on the Literature*, 1972:34

<sup>6</sup> Bosch 1993:327-329; Brackney, 'The Baptist Missionary Society in Proper Context', *The Baptist Quarterly*, 1992, 8:366

organisations can also limit the liberty of people, particularly when misused by a less democratic leadership. Oligarchy, goal displacement, ideological constraint and competition are factors that jeopardise the ideal of voluntarism in a specific organisation.<sup>7</sup>

In relation to mission movements, the voluntary principle is often seen as a corroboration of personal commitment to Christian faith. Using free-will to opt for a sacrificial way of living has been considered one of the main virtues throughout the history of Christianity and surrender to the cause of the faith has frequently led to involvement in voluntary activity in mission. The best examples are certainly the Catholic orders with oaths of poverty, chastity and obedience. The Protestant mission movements have followed, in many ways, the same requirements of voluntary submission.

One of the effects of the Enlightenment's philosophy of religious toleration and pluralism was that religion increasingly became a private affair. It was up to the individual to choose which spiritual way to follow and the faith with which to be identified. The so-called 'conversion narrative' defined this personal preference and "the locus of Christian commitment moved from the state church to the voluntary society of 'true' converted believers".<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> McConnell, Grant, 'The Public Values of the Private Associations', in Pennock and Chapman, *Voluntary Associations*, 1969:153; Brackney, *Christian Voluntarism – Theology and Praxis*, 1997:125

<sup>8</sup> Stanley 2001:13

## 2. Voluntary Associations in Society

Voluntary associations are defined by Fairchild as “a group freely organised by citizens for the pursuit of some interests in contrast to a state established agency”.<sup>9</sup> Two contrasting principles of association can be found in voluntary associations: shared commitment and legal principle.<sup>10</sup> Shared commitment describes an association’s common interests and objectives and stands for the inner force that keeps any voluntary association united. Legal principle is developed through by-laws and praxis, creating a set of rules necessary to structure the organisation and ensure its efficiency. Associations have the tendency to move towards a dominance of the legal principle and the concept of shared commitment is only invoked when the organisation suffers external threat.<sup>11</sup> In the case of mission movements, these contrasting principles are seen in the tension between the free commitment by a person to participate based on religious conviction of vocation and the formalised membership that demands loyalty to stated by-laws. To leave the organisation is often difficult owing to a sense of guilt over deserting the vocation or assumed obligations that legally keep the person associated to the mission.

The question is “how applicable is the voluntary concept in non-Western societies?”. Both historical and cross-cultural comparative studies are necessary if significant generalisations about the role of organisations are to be made.<sup>12</sup> In Africa, Asia and Latin America, as in the West, there was an important restructuring of both capital and state responsibility during the industrialisation process in the mid to late twentieth

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<sup>9</sup> Fairchild 1970:17

<sup>10</sup> Fuller, ‘Two Principles of Human Association’, in Pennock and Chapman, eds., *Voluntary Associations*, 1969:6

<sup>11</sup> Fuller 1969:13

<sup>12</sup> Silverman, David, *The Theory of Organisations*, 1970:172

century. A tendency to delegate services formerly belonging to the public sector to non-governmental organisations strengthened the position of voluntary associations. In the case of developing countries, the emergence of foundations for intervention efforts contributed to the democratisation process in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>13</sup>

In West Africa, voluntary associations have arisen in urban contexts out of the grouping of migrants into ethnic and tribal divisions, in order to preserve racial allegiance and to provide protection from the hostility of other groups in the same area.<sup>14</sup> The associations organised by migrants coming to Accra from the north of Ghana is one example. In India, one of the main factors prompting people to participate in voluntary associations has been their social need, for example for education and medical care. Taylor affirms the difference between the typical voluntary associations in the West and those organised in Indian society where the “traditional social structures and values are far from compatible with a rise of free voluntary associations”. Associations in India are centred in the caste system while in the West the associations are based on common interests and not necessarily with people from the same social background.<sup>15</sup>

The Brazilian sociologist Pedro Scuro emphasises the emergence of a new social class concerned with its cultural capital and which formed new kinds of organisations in order to enhance their power of influence in society. These organisations, together with existing labour unions and other non-governmental organisations, constitute the so-called ‘civil society’ in Brazil. The organised civil society is one of the basic forms for

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<sup>13</sup> Marsden, David, ‘Indigenous Management – Introduction’, in Wright, Susan, ed., *Anthropology of Organizations*, 1994:35. Marsden uses the word ‘intervention’ about initiatives that help to change the situation of people and cause positive development in society

<sup>14</sup> Little, Kenneth, *West African Urbanization: A Study of Voluntary Associations in Social Change*, 1970:26

<sup>15</sup> Taylor, Richard, ‘Missionary Societies and the Development of Other Forms of Associations in India’, in Robertson, ed., *Voluntary Associations: A Study of Groups in Free Societies*, 1966:189

democratic participation influencing the government and contributing to the development of the nation.<sup>16</sup> In urban settings, the trend has been the same as in Europe and North America, with an explosion of associations for social interaction, religious activities and entertainment.

These examples show that the reasons why people engage in voluntary associations vary depending on historical and cultural settings. In a society where people still need to fight for their human rights, the tendency is to use associations to enhance their influence and empowering their cause. Where there is already established democratic governance that respects human rights, non-governmental organisations tend to provide activities according to particular common interests and social relationships. In all instances, however, the existence of such associations provides important models for voluntarism that can be used by the emergent mission movements.

### **3. The Nature of Voluntary Associations**

Ideally, voluntary associations are based on the common interest of all members who are the prime beneficiaries of the activities.<sup>17</sup> Norms regulate the power of the leadership, and moral values and standards are set in order to secure that the association fulfils its objectives.<sup>18</sup> The functionalist approach to organisations is helpful for classifying forms of organisations according to their main purpose. Nevertheless, the reality of how organisations work and are perceived by their users is more complex.

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<sup>16</sup> Scuro, Pedro, *Sociologia – Ativa e Didática* [Sociology – Active and Didactic], 2003:148-149

<sup>17</sup> For a comparison with other kinds of organisations see Worsley, Peter, *Introducing Sociology*, 1973:233

<sup>18</sup> Worsley 1973:234

Boonin suggests that the voluntary sector should be defined according to three different models of organisations: the individualistic or atomistic, the organic and the relational. Each of these models leads to a certain understanding of what a voluntary association is.<sup>19</sup> In the case of the atomistic model, participating members of an association freely consent to the establishment and continuation of a relationship. The dilemma with this model is that when people decide to join an association they also accept obligations based on certain commands or rules and, consequently, lose the freedom to follow them or not. The organic model, on the other hand, forces the meaning of freedom to be more of a self-realisation, in contrast with self-determination. A person fulfils a social role and function independently of his or her own will.<sup>20</sup> The question then is how 'voluntary' his participation really is. The third, the relational model, gives rise to a more subjective conception of a voluntary association and

It measures the voluntariness of an association not in terms of self-imposed rules, nor in terms of goals or ends which fulfil the nature of man, but rather in terms of the kind of feelings which engender and sustain its existence.<sup>21</sup>

Any organisation has a central value-system which expresses moral sentiments and normative expectations, defining the goal of a society and the rules for leadership.<sup>22</sup> The cultural context has a strong impact on the ideology of an association "because the founders of organisations, whatever their aims, will usually take their ideas about efficient organisation from the stock of knowledge characteristic of their society at that

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<sup>19</sup> Boonin, Leonard, 'Man and Society: An Examination of Three Models', in Pennock and Chapman, eds., *Voluntary Associations*, 1969:81-83

<sup>20</sup> Comparison can be made with the way Durkheim describes society involving mechanical or organic solidarity. Durkheim, Emile, *Da Divisão do Trabalho Social* [The Division of Labour in Society], 1983:35-70

<sup>21</sup> Boonin 1969:82

<sup>22</sup> Silverman 1970:57



time”.<sup>23</sup> The influence of the cultural context is relevant when analysing the emergence of voluntary associations in general, and mission movements in particular, in non-Western settings.

The pattern of an organisation is also affected by how members are oriented towards the organisation. Prisons and monasteries could be said to exemplify this.<sup>24</sup> Detention centres are organisations in which the authorities are, for the most, obliged to administer people against their will and have to make arrangements to ensure that work continues despite opposition from the inmates. Monasteries are different because the attitudes to the institution not only affect the monks’ experience inside but are also crucial in determining whether they are accepted as members or not. The attitudes towards an organisation will also differ according to the degree to which a club, church or political party branch is controlled from outside. Being part of a centralised body, members may have less scope to mould the organisation according to their inclination. This is, in fact, a frequent source of tension in voluntary associations. Staff members in headquarters are engaged in bureaucratic administration and are relatively free from pressures and divergent viewpoints that influence behaviour in local groups. One of the critiques against mission movements from the West, as mentioned in Chapter Two, has been the way mother-churches and missions have kept their influence over newer organisations that have emerged on the mission fields.

In contrast to the functionalist view of organisations, based on a purpose-centred approach to an organisation, a post-modern analysis would be less one-dimensional. According to Gordon, Foucault identified that power structures within organisations determine the way people act. There are “manifold forms of domination that can be

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<sup>23</sup> Silverman 1970:148

<sup>24</sup> Worsley 1973:236

experienced within society...the multiple forms of subjugation that have a place and function within the social organism”.<sup>25</sup> Foucault’s theory of domination is significant because it highlights the fact that there is not always coherence between the stated purpose of an organisation and the way it really functions.<sup>26</sup> There are also a variety of motives for a person to become associated with any organisation, voluntary or not. The different power structures present in society affect individuals and organisations in ways that it may not be immediately obvious. The fact that someone chooses to be part of a monastery, for instance, might be voluntary based on a personal understanding of vocation, but could also result from pressure from family, culture or even religious conviction. These factors apply to mission movements as voluntary associations as well. The degree of genuine ‘voluntariness’ may be hard to ascertain as well as the level of consistency between the stated objectives and the de facto activities of an association.

#### **4. Voluntarism in Christian Tradition**

An analysis of mission organisations as voluntary associations should consider some examples of the application of voluntarism in Christian ideology and tradition.

The Protestant Reformation is a critical period in respect of the development of voluntarism within the Church. The Reformers were divided into what have been called the right and the left wings. The right wing maintained the conception of Christendom

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<sup>25</sup> Gordon, C., *Michel Foucault: Power/Knowledge*, 1980:119, quoted by Cockburn, Cynthia, ‘Play of Power’, in Wright, ed., *Anthropology of Organizations*, 1994:110

<sup>26</sup> Foucault, Michel, *Microfísica do Poder* [from the German: *Mykrophysik der Macht*], 2003:133; Foucault, Michel, *Madness & Civilization*, 1967:44

while the left wing advocated the principle of freedom of association.<sup>27</sup> Much of the voluntarily thinking is linked to John Calvin as representative for the left wing of the Reformation. Calvinists tended to establish associations with a pluralist conception of church and society. Nevertheless, the main representatives of the left wing, on the other hand, were the Anabaptists. The Anabaptist doctrine of a church with congregational self-government had strong influence on the later developments of voluntary organisations among Evangelical churches. Novak compares the voluntary concept among Anabaptists with the Roman Catholic emphasis on obedience, saying that

The Anabaptist view of the church is rooted in the conception of discipleship. And this conception of discipleship seems very similar to the conception of a professed religious life among Catholics, in at least a few important respects. Such a life is a free, voluntary commitment.<sup>28</sup>

Their followers, the Mennonites, brought the emphasis on voluntarism to the United States. The contribution towards voluntarism made by German Pietists, Baptists and Quakers, as part of the Nonconformist movements, should also be acknowledged.<sup>29</sup>

The Pietists also held the idea of a 'confessional church' leading to the organisation of associations and institutions to assist in education, children's work, care for foreigners, orphanages and training in the trades. The Baptist movement in England, through its different ramifications, incorporated various forms of voluntarism into their churches, which became fellowships of believers who voluntarily professed their faith and

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<sup>27</sup> Hunt, James, 'Voluntary Associations as a Key to History', in Robertson, ed., *Voluntary Associations: A Study of Groups in Free Societies*, 1966:360

<sup>28</sup> Novak, 'The Meaning of "Church" in Anabaptism and Roman Catholicism: Past and Present', in Robertson, ed., *Voluntary Associations: A Study of Groups in Free Societies*, 1966: 101

<sup>29</sup> Handy, Robert, 'The Voluntary Principle in Religion and Religious Freedom in America', in Robertson, ed., *Voluntary Associations: A Study of Groups in Free Societies*, 1966:130

submitted to a new believer's baptism.<sup>30</sup> John Locke, the main defender of Nonconformity in its early stage, was among the first to define sharply the nature of the voluntary church and its theological foundation. His views on toleration, under-girded by his definition of all churches as voluntary societies, are of major importance for the evolution of religious voluntarism in the West.<sup>31</sup>

The spread of Evangelicalism and Pietism in the eighteenth century also led to a more general acceptance of the concept of voluntarism. During the Great Awakening in the United States, denominations such as the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians, historically committed to uniformity, incorporated voluntarism into their church system. In line with the religious freedom that characterised the nation, voluntarism in America grew with the creation of new types of voluntary associations.<sup>32</sup>

These democratic elements of voluntarism, seen in the history of the Western Church, have been translated into other continents through the establishment of Evangelical churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The emerging mission movements in these newer churches tend to apply the same voluntary principles when sending organisations are formed, as shown in following chapters.

## **5. The Local Church as a Voluntary Association**

A question that arises is whether or not churches can really be considered as valid forms of voluntary association. From the historical description above, voluntarism in Christian

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<sup>30</sup> Brackney 1997:33

<sup>31</sup> Brackney 1997:37

<sup>32</sup> Handy 1966:132

tradition is evident. In a situation where membership of a church is automatic, as in some countries with a state church, the level of voluntariness could be questioned. It would be more a case of ‘mechanical solidarity’, to use Durkheim’s terminology. In traditional churches in Northern Europe, for example, the concept of ‘folk-church’ is expressed in the almost universal baptism and confirmation of children. As a result, virtually everyone residing in the geographical territory of the parish is a member of the congregation.<sup>33</sup>

The development of both Catholicism and Evangelicalism in the United States has favoured the establishment of churches with characteristics of voluntary associations.<sup>34</sup> American Evangelicalism is made up of ‘voluntary churches’ due to the cultural heritage that results in a “pervasive democratization of social life in the nation”.<sup>35</sup> There is no doubt that North American ecclesiology has, generally speaking, given great importance to the voluntary nature of the church. The result is the appearance of a congregational form of church government.

Christian congregations thus became one of the best models of the principle of voluntary society both in Europe and in North America (although the differentiation between church and association was stronger in the European context than in the United States). In the latter, the emergence of church denominations was also based on voluntarism and, in that sense denominations were not significantly different to mission societies or local congregations.<sup>36</sup> Although it is not possible to completely identify the

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<sup>33</sup> Gustafson, James, ‘The Voluntary Church: A Moral Appraisal’, in Robertson, ed., *Voluntary Associations: A Study of Groups in Free Societies*, 1966:300

<sup>34</sup> Powell, Milton, ed., *The Voluntary Church*, 1967:xi-xix

<sup>35</sup> Gustafson 1966:315

<sup>36</sup> Walls 2000:229

Christian churches as voluntary associations, the voluntary concept has grown to be an integral part of the ecclesiastical system.

## 6. Church and Para-Church

The emergence of voluntary associations within the established churches benefited the ecclesiastical institutions in many ways. The voluntary society became the vehicle for catholic spirit, was not restricted to ecclesiastics, embraced the masses and created a new reading public through the publication of Christian magazines used to sensitise public opinion.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the alleged benefits, the right of these associations to exist as para-church structures within the Church has been questioned. The debate about whether denominations should allow non-official and parallel mission structures to send out missionaries from their churches started early in the history of Evangelical movements. Some denominations formed their own sending structures. One example was the Church Missionary Society in Britain. Charles Simeon, who championed the formation of the CMS, “insisted on the submission of that society and its missionaries to the hierarchy of the Established Church”.<sup>38</sup> However, there was even at this initial phase the potential for tension between the emerging mission structures and the official church administration. It seems that during the second half of the nineteenth century the tendency was to favour denominational mission projects but that at the end of the century the pendulum

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<sup>37</sup> Walls 2000:248-251

<sup>38</sup> Bennett, John, ‘Voluntary Initiative and Church Order: Competing Values in the Missionary Agenda of Charles Simeon’, *The Bulletin of The Scottish Institute of Missionary Studies*, 6/7 1990:8

swung once again towards societal mission and a more ecumenical spirit.<sup>39</sup> From a church perspective it was recognised that responsibility for religious activities lay with registered churches. Para-church organisations defended the principle of a free market, arguing that they could be much more flexible and spontaneous in responding to people's desire to engage in different kinds of outreach programmes.<sup>40</sup>

The terms 'modality' and 'sodality' have been used in order to differentiate between the church as a local institution and the parallel mission movements that emerged within a church context. 'Modality' is defined as being the overall, given, governmental structure of a human community, be it city, state, church, denomination and synagogue, to which people usually belong without having made a personal choice. 'Sodality', according to Winter, refers to decentralised structures, usually voluntary initiatives, where membership is less likely to be automatic.<sup>41</sup> To take an example, the New Testament churches could be described as modalities and the Pauline missionary team as a sodality. In each epoch of Christianity, sodalities have played an important role in the expansion of Christian faith. The main models of these mission movements have already been highlighted in Chapter Two.

Brackney's and Winter's categories (church and para-church, respectively, modality and sodality) are helpful for classifying mission initiatives from a pragmatic perspective, demonstrating the difference between engaging in local activities of a congregation and extending beyond the immediate neighbourhood. By and large, the common division between church and para-church in relation to mission has been that inter or non-denominational structures are seen as para-church movements. Theologically, however,

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<sup>39</sup> Bosch 1993:331-332

<sup>40</sup> Brackney 1997:144-145

<sup>41</sup> Winter, Ralph, 'Protestant Mission Societies: The American Experience', *Missiology: An International Review*, 1979:142-143

Brackney's and Winter's categories are questionable. All activities, regardless of their nature, that occur within any ecclesiastical system belong to the church and are obviously the church in action. If 'church' is defined exclusively as the local congregation of Evangelical believers, then everything done parallel to the local activities could be considered as para-church, including denominational structures, educational or social institution and missionary sending structures. However, for the sake of identifying initiatives that have emerged within the context of churches but are not directly linked to the official ecclesiastical governance, the term 'para-church' can be useful and may often denote a voluntary association.

## **7. Characteristics of Mission Organisations as Voluntary Associations**

In the context of Christianity, it is probably in mission outreach that voluntary associations have been most instrumental and effective. Walls says that

In Europe and America alike, effective overseas missions began not with the official machinery of the churches, but with voluntary societies. To a remarkable degree societies continued in Europe (and notably in Britain) to be the principal means of conducting missions, even when the idea of overseas mission had become universally accepted in the churches so that the denominations effectively 'adopted' their denominational societies.<sup>42</sup>

Mission societies as voluntary associations had their birth in a Western context and therefore have an inherent characteristic of being outcome-focused organisations, with an overt purpose of being tools for the expansion of Christian faith. Thus the emergence of mission movements has been not so much related to theological concepts as to

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<sup>42</sup> Walls 2000:229-230



practicalities, based on a perception that established churches such as the Episcopal, Presbyterian and Congregational denominations lacked necessary tools to do the missionary work.<sup>43</sup>

Something of the ethos of the mission societies as voluntary associations can be found in William Carey's proposal regarding the formation of a mission society, as presented in his *Enquiry*, saying that

Suppose a company of serious Christians, ministers and private persons, were to form themselves in a society, and make a number of rules respecting the regulation of the plan, and the persons who are to be employed as missionaries, the means of defraying the expense, etc., etc. This society must consist of persons whose hearts are in the work, men of serious religion, and possessing a spirit of perseverance; there must be a determination not to admit any person who is not of this description, or to retain him longer than he answers to it.<sup>44</sup>

Before examining in more detail the general characteristics of mission societies as voluntary associations, it is important to acknowledge the diversity of their structural forms. Each association has its own history and particular development that makes it unique. At the same time, however, there are various features common to all. From the historical review and general observation of Western mission movements, their main characteristics are that they are:

- Founded owing to a need for a more flexible structure within the church for missionary outreach;
- Set up by a denomination, a group of churches or individuals for the specific purpose of doing mission;

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<sup>43</sup> Walls 2000:247

<sup>44</sup> Carey 1961:108

- Formed by voluntary membership with deep commitment;
- Established as a separate organisation linked to churches by formal or informal agreements;
- Based on voluntarism, although staff and missionaries receive payment for their labour;
- Financed through offerings, gifts and in-kind contribution of its members, and not generally by church taxes, tithes or state resources; and,
- Frequently led by a designated board representing the members. In some cases, the initial phase of the association is marked by the strong leadership of the founder.

These characteristics are observed in mission movements in NSCs as well as OSCs and are, in many ways, typical of any kind of voluntary association based on individual commitment and strong belief in a specific area of concern or interest.

### **7.1. Foundation and Finances**

Christian churches have tended to concentrate their activities primarily on the local community due to the urgent needs of their members, and a desire to reach out to their neighbours with whom identification is easier. There is, therefore, often the need for initiatives that focus on mission outside the local milieu, and enable people to commit personally to a particular cause. Occasionally churches and denominations have taken it upon themselves to get involved in mission, as in the case of the CMS in the late eighteenth century Britain. In most cases, however, the initiative has come from an individual (such as William Carey), seeking support from other people and from churches. The development of an association's organisational structure and leadership

style has often depended on its origin. The instrumental nature of the missionary society is seen in the voluntary association of individuals and churches freely acting together to achieve a common goal. It is hence an essentially pragmatic approach, the design of an instrument for a specific purpose. This purpose-driven element of a mission organisation results in particular requirements for people who wish to get involved and the kind of link it should have to a particular church structure.

The financial aspect of mission movements as non-profit organisations has been, for the most part, an issue of special concern. Based on free giving and support, the endurance of missionary activities has relied strongly on the commitment of donors and on persuasive promotional work. Frequently, marketing is seen as a priority, guaranteeing survival at a time when there is increasing competition for resources. Essentially an organisation dependant on voluntary service, financial management has not always been given proper attention and this has become a major source of tension and misunderstanding amongst them. Mission organisations are increasingly required to follow legal standards in respect of their financial administration. These developments are reflected in codes of good practice used by national associations of mission organisations such as the Brazilian Association of Cross-Cultural Missions (AMTB) and the India Mission Association (IMA).

Although most missions would emphasise an element of faith as regards their finances, particularly those designated specifically as 'faith missions' (discussed in previous chapter), there are different systems in place for the provision and expenditure of resources. In denominational structures the main source for funds are local churches, either through a direct commitment to a particular missionary and mission project or through a common denominational account for that purpose. In inter-denominational

agencies, the support may also come from local churches but typically there is more dependency on individual donors.<sup>45</sup>

## 7.2. Governance and Leadership Styles

The most common forms of governance in the mission movements are:<sup>46</sup>

- A board of directors elected by the General Assembly of the denomination, or designated by the denominational board and representing primarily denominational interests, as seen in the majority of Church mission structures;
- A board of directors elected by the General Assembly of the mission society, representing primarily the interests of its members, as seen in the majority of the inter-denominational agencies;
- A board of trustees designated by representatives from the donor entities, as in organisations heavily funded by foundations and individual investors;
- A family-run or individual controlled organisation, particularly in the first and second generations of leadership. Founders will tend to lead the mission during their lifetime and, if possible, pass the responsibility on to one of their children.

There are, of course, variations in these models of governance. However, it is remarkable how many mission organisations started through the personal initiative of a charismatic leader and have developed into a more democratic organisation after some years of existence. The cultural context has strong influence on how leadership is

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<sup>45</sup> There are three basic forms of organisations in relation to a church institution: the denominational, the inter-denominational (formed by two or more denominations) and the non-denominational. The inter-denominational and the non-denominational forms are often not differentiated and the term inter-denominational is used to describe both

<sup>46</sup> This list of common forms of governance is primarily based on the case studies and examples given in the studied countries

exercised. Leadership styles in organisations often reflect the dominant pattern in society, based on both established practices and affirmed values. Drawing his conclusion from the findings of a global research involving sixty-two societies around the world (GLOBE research project), House affirms that “Leadership is culturally contingent. That is, views of the importance and value of leadership vary across cultures”.<sup>47</sup>

The different ways in which leadership is perceived by different cultures can be measured, according to the GLOBE research, in terms of eight dimensions: performance orientation (PO), assertiveness (AS), future orientation (FO), humane orientation (HO), institutional collectivism (IC), in-group collectivism (IG), gender egalitarianism (GE), power distance (PD) and uncertainty avoidance (UA).<sup>48</sup> These dimensions were studied both in respect to affirmed values in the different societies and of the perceived practices within organisations. The scores given to affirmed values relate to theoretical ideals within the culture and not necessarily to the practical outworking of those ideals. The following table shows how leadership is perceived to be practised in the five countries of the UK, the United States, Brazil, India and Nigeria (the only West African

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<sup>47</sup> House, Robert J. et al., *Culture, Leadership and Organizations*, 2004:xv,5. The Globe research used data from 17,300 managers in 951 organisations in 62 different cultures, “measuring the variables with cultural sensitivity and developing instruments in consultation with members of the relevant cultures”. House’s affirmation does not necessarily imply that organisational structures are not influenced by culture. The studies of mission organisations in NSCs show that mission models and structures from OSCs have been emulated in many cases at the same time that new forms have emerged following local cultural patterns

<sup>48</sup> House 2004:xvi-xvii. A simplified definition of these terms would be that ‘performance orientation’ is related to an emphasis on results and development; ‘assertiveness’ is related to self-confidence and the belief that there are resources for global competition; ‘future orientation’ is related to planning and investing for the future; ‘humane orientation’ is related to an emphasis on personal relationships; ‘institution collectivism’ is related to fidelity to institutional structures; ‘in-group collectivism’ is related to solidarity within peer groups; ‘gender egalitarianism’ stresses women’s equal rights to leadership in society; ‘power distance’ is related to a powerful elite with low degree of democracy; and, ‘uncertainty avoidance’ is related to a more formalised society preventing unnecessary risks or changes

country included in the GLOBE study) in respect of the eight cultural dimensions (being 1.0 the lowest and 7.0 the highest cultural orientation).<sup>49</sup>

**Table 3: Perception of how leadership is practised according to eight cultural dimensions (based on the GLOBE research)**

	<b>PO</b>	<b>FO</b>	<b>GE</b>	<b>AS</b>	<b>IC</b>	<b>IG</b>	<b>PD</b>	<b>HO</b>	<b>UA</b>
<b>UK</b>	4.08	4.28	3.67	4.15	4.27	4.08	5.15	3.72	4.65
<b>US</b>	4.49	4.15	3.34	4.55	4.20	4.25	4.88	4.17	4.15
<b>Brazil</b>	4.04	3.81	3.31	4.20	4.38	5.92	5.33	3.66	3.60
<b>India</b>	4.25	4.19	2.90	3.73	3.83	5.18	5.47	4.57	4.15
<b>Nigeria</b>	3.92	4.09	3.01	4.79	4.14	5.55	5.80	4.10	4.29

There seems to be an overall discontent with power structures, regardless of the culture and political system to which the organisations belong, although the scores of ‘power distance’ are higher in Nigeria, India and Brazil. The major difference between the Western and non-Western countries is the higher ranking for ‘in-group collectivism’ in the latter. The American emphasis on ‘performance orientation’ and ‘assertiveness’ indicates the presence of a more individualistic and competitive society. However, Nigeria has also a high score for competitiveness. ‘Uncertainty avoidance’ could indicate a society where the government takes more responsibility for the common welfare, such as in the UK.

Not all these dimensions are equally applicable to voluntary associations, although they are interesting aspects of organisations in general and have a decisive influence in the way that leadership is valued. Leadership behaviours linked to these cultural values can be divided into the following categories:

- Charismatic/Value-Based Leadership;

<sup>49</sup> The table is based on the results of the GLOBE research and a compilation of data

- Team-Oriented Leadership;
- Participative Leadership;
- Humane-Oriented Leadership;
- Autonomous Leadership; and,
- Self-protective Leadership.<sup>50</sup>

Analysing the results of the study in relation to different cultural settings, it is revealing that the values related to ideal leadership do not differ as much as might have been expected. In the UK and the USA, the leadership styles most highly esteemed are charismatic/value-based, team oriented and participative. In Brazil, the same three have the highest scores. In India and in Nigeria the most valued are the charismatic/value-based, team-oriented and humane-oriented dimensions.<sup>51</sup>

However, the practice of how leadership is exercised, according to the perception of those interviewed, shows major differences. This is certainly due to the fact that there are some universally accepted theories of ideal leadership but the extent to which they are applied depends upon tradition and cultural behaviour.

According to the GLOBE research, when the cultural orientation dimensions and leadership styles of organisations in the five countries are compared, the key findings are that

- Leadership tends to be self-protective in every country;
- Charismatic/Value-based leadership is highly rated in the UK and the USA;

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<sup>50</sup> For definitions see House 2004:14

<sup>51</sup> House 2004:713-714

- ‘Power distance’ is a perceived problem in all cultures but the concern is notably higher in the non-Western countries;
- Team-oriented leadership is highly valued in Brazil; and,
- Humane-oriented leadership is highly valued in India<sup>52</sup>

Applying the GLOBE categories to mission movements as voluntary associations, it is firstly important to note that lack of gender egalitarianism is an important issue among mission organisations, both in OSCs and in NSCs. Very few mission executives are women, although the majority of personnel are female. In Brazil, only nine out of 101 mission organisations have female leadership; in India, three out of 147 missions, and there is no female leadership in Ghana.<sup>53</sup> Secondly, competitiveness was an exclusive characteristic of OSCs mission organisations until recently. However, as already mentioned, the growing demands for efficiency and struggle for finances have led to an increasing competition among those in NSCs as well. Thirdly, self-protectiveness is shown in various ways such as in the tendency towards denominationalism in the face of hardening competition, the difficulty for a founder to hand over leadership to someone outside his family group, and the lack of deeper commitment towards co-operation. Fourthly, the cultures in NSCs favour leadership with humane orientation, seen particularly in a personal relationship between leaders and staff. This often makes fixed rules and written agreements unnecessary for an organisation to function effectively. At the same time, informality frequently creates uncertainty and reinforces the power of the leader who, by and large, ‘has the last word’ when conflicting interpretations appear. Fifthly, the correlation between culture-values and leadership practices results in older democracies tending towards a more democratic leadership,

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<sup>52</sup> House 2004:xviii

<sup>53</sup> The information is found in the Catalogue of the AMTB (ref. 2005), the Directory of IMA’s Members (ref. 2002) and the list of members provided by the Ghanaian Evangelical Mission Association (ref. 2006)



whilst in authoritarian and newer democracies the propensity is towards a more authoritarian control.

These tendencies are confirmed in the so-called REMAP II study, particularly in the aspects of there being a higher degree of direct communication between leaders and missionaries on the field among OSCs and lower participation of missionaries in the decision-making among NSCs.<sup>54</sup>

## 8. The Life-Cycle of Voluntary Associations

Weber presented a typology of organisations based on the primary source of authority on which they are based. In 'charismatic' organisations, he said, it is the personal qualities of the leader that attract followers. In 'traditional' organisations, it is long-standing custom that guarantees discipleship. In 'bureaucratic' organisations, people submit to rules and procedures. The dominant institution in modern society, according to Weber, is the 'bureaucratic' one, being the highest level of organisational process. The goal is to depersonalise the administrative process so that the organisation is led by rules and procedures and not by personal wills. The bureaucratic model is, therefore, for Weber, the ideal or perfect type of organisation.<sup>55</sup>

Brackney agrees with Weber, seeing the same kind of development in most voluntary associations. He divides the chronological life of a voluntary association into four stages:

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<sup>54</sup> Bloecher, Detlef, 'Good Agency Practices: Lessons from REMAP II', *Connections* 2004:14-15

<sup>55</sup> Weber, Max, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation*, 1947, quoted in Pugh, D.S. and D.J. Hickson, 'The Comparative Study of Organisations', in Salaman and Thompson, *People and Organisations*, 1973:52-53

- Incipient – the development of a close circle of people based around an urgent objective or a charismatic leader. Generally this stage lasts for only a few months;
- Efficient – involving the establishment of rules and protocols – a statement of purpose or mission, membership qualifications, sanctions, and methods of communication with the public and the constituency of the association. A significant factor in this stage could be the transition of leadership, which should be done through a democratic process;
- Formal – when preoccupation with the structure begins, leading to routinisation; and,
- Dis-organisational – or disintegration – when criticism arises and the ‘crisis’ lead either to the death of the organisation or its re-organisation.<sup>56</sup>

Although many organisations pass through these four stages, as seen in denominations and mission movements throughout Church history, they do not necessarily apply to the development of every voluntary association. Not all go from a ‘charismatic’ to a ‘bureaucratic’ system, to use Weber’s language. Pugh and Hickson suggest that “it is far more useful to regard organisations as ranging from more to less bureaucratic in their activities, so that some have more routines and procedures and paperwork and files, and some have less”.<sup>57</sup> The cultural context will also influence the development of voluntary associations, as with other organisations. In Latin America, organisations often grow under a ‘charismatic’ leadership and before becoming ‘bureaucratic’, new ‘charismatic’ leaders appear leading to a split into two or more new ‘charismatic’ associations. Examples of this are the new Pentecostal movements in Brazil, for example the

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<sup>56</sup> Brackney 1997:86-87

<sup>57</sup> Pugh and Hickson 1973:53

Universal Church of the Kingdom of God and the International Church of Grace. These churches were started by Bishop Macedo and R.R. Soares respectively; both founders (who incidentally were brothers-in-law) had left an older Pentecostal movement.

Nonetheless, there is generally a tendency for voluntary associations to go through a life-cycle that starts with the initiative and vision of one person (or of a few people), grows into a voluntaristic society and eventually becomes an institutionalised organisation. The second phase is generally one of strong development and growth, followed by a phase of stagnation or even slight decrease in effectiveness. The institutional cycle leads generally to the critical phase of death or restructuring of the organisation.<sup>58</sup> Unsurprisingly, mission movements follow the same trend as other voluntary associations, frequently developing from the personal initiative of the founder to a more sophisticated organisational structure after some years of existence.

In the studied countries, Brazil, Ghana and India, the cycle of ‘foreign missions – national churches – indigenous mission movements’ demonstrates this aspect of the development of voluntary associations. A missionary impetus was transmitted to national churches by Western missions and that has resulted in autochthonous mission initiatives. This shows not only that the Christian message and structural models were translated into the receiving context, but that church functions, such as mission, were part of the intended translation as well. However, the trend in many national churches has been the same as in their mother churches in OSCs, focusing more on local growth and resulting gradually in institutionalisation. Although originating in mission efforts from abroad, national churches have not always been keen to engage in missionary activities and entrepreneurial and creative leadership have been necessary to initiate

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<sup>58</sup> Fairchild 1970:84

mission movements in NSCs. In Latin America, the COMIBAM movement is a typical example of this.<sup>59</sup> Evangelical churches had been established by European and North American missionaries during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, resulting in national denominations with strong drive for evangelising their respective countries. In most cases, there was very little emphasis on mission beyond the national borders. In the 1970s, owing to various factors (described in Chapter Four), initiatives were taken to found agencies for cross-cultural mission, generally without the support of the established ecclesiastical organisations. The united effort of these emerging mission movements in Latin America resulted in the COMIBAM movement that has generated many more mission initiatives in the continent.

## 9. Evaluation of the Voluntary Model

An assessment of the development of voluntary associations, focusing primarily on those that emerged within the Protestant churches and represent a significant proportion of Evangelical mission movements, has revealed both positive and negative factors. One positive outcome of the voluntary model, besides the fact that mission societies and agencies did provide a vehicle for the propagation of the Christian faith, is the involvement of volunteers or laypersons who commit themselves and their resources for the accomplishment of the association's goals.<sup>60</sup> Voluntary missionary societies have also played an important role in the communication between Western churches and newer churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America, creating bridges from one culture to another. Other benefits of Christian voluntarism include the empowerment extended to

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<sup>59</sup> Ekstrom, Bertil, *El Espíritu de COMIBAM* [The Spirit of COMIBAM], 2002:8,9

<sup>60</sup> Brackney 1997:137

many of the under-represented groups, experimentation, increased response to temporary and urgent (spontaneous) needs and new leadership. Walls reminds us that “It was in the voluntary societies that women began to play an organizational role in church life.”<sup>61</sup>

On the negative side is, in particular, the tense relationship between para-church organisations and established churches. The idealistic view of voluntary associations and their importance for the development of democratic societies is also questioned especially when the proposed model follows an American pattern with an exaggerated fear of totalitarianism.<sup>62</sup> The alleged freedom of choice provided by the voluntary organisations often implies in lack of liberty when an associate has to accept rules to which he becomes bound and from which he can not escape.<sup>63</sup>

Although this criticism may be justified in some cases, the mission movements as voluntary associations seem to be a vital tool for Christian outreach both in OSCs and NSCs, for the foreseeable future. It has been suggested that twenty-first century mission organisations will display three main characteristics: niche oriented, networked and technologically adept.<sup>64</sup> They will be niche oriented because the tendency is towards specialisation (such as in international business companies), focusing on a specific task or an ethnic group. They will also be strongly networked due to increased inter-relationship following trends in a post-modern mindset. The use of technology has already become a key factor, communication is crucial for networking and for promoting the organisation as well as for the transmission of the Christian message.

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<sup>61</sup> Walls 2002:17

<sup>62</sup> McConnell 1969:149-160

<sup>63</sup> McBride, William, ‘Voluntary Association: The Basis of an Ideal Model, and the “Democratic” Failure’, in Pennock and Chapman, eds., *Voluntary Associations*, 1969:211

<sup>64</sup> Skreslet, Stanley, ‘Impending Transformation: Mission Structures for a New Century’, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 1999:4-5

## Conclusion

Looking at the emergence of mission movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America, it is clear that issues similar to those identified in Europe and North America, are also present in NSCs. In the effort to transmit the Christian message to other places, the translation has involved various church and mission models. While new mission movements have inherited the strengths of the voluntary association model, this legacy has also brought with it chronic weaknesses. The tension between the established church and the para-church initiatives is as strong as in OSCs, and in some cases even stronger, as will be seen in the analysis of the movements in NSCs in later chapters.

Another crucial question is the essence of ‘real voluntariness’ in sending structures today. The growth of an economic and entrepreneurial society (due to globalisation forces and the neo-liberal free market in the ‘global village’), leads to mission movements having increasing difficulty in recruiting volunteers, both as supporters and as missionaries. In Brazil, this has led to a growing denominationalism where some denominations demand fidelity of the local community to their own missionary enterprise, abandoning the co-operation with inter-denominational missions.

Before turning to the mission movements in Brazil, Ghana and India, respectively, the most significant points made in this chapter should be summarised. These points will also be taken into account in the following chapters.

- The voluntary principle is an important principle in Christian tradition both in Catholic and Protestant streams. This principle has been exported to the mission

fields both through the examples of the missionaries and through the ideals of Christian discipleship;

- Voluntarism has played a significant role in the democratisation process in modern society, based on the assumption that human beings are capable of discerning what is best for them and for their community. The existence of voluntarism and voluntary organisations in Africa, Asia and Latin America shows the potential of these initiatives to challenge the political and social status quo;
- The establishment of routines within an association could easily lead to deviation from the original objective and to stagnation of the organisation;
- Mission societies have used the voluntary association model as an effective way to involve lay people first hand in the expansion of the Christian message throughout the world;
- The link between established church structures and mission organisations can basically be defined as denominational and inter-denominational;
- There is great variety in how mission movements as voluntary associations are administered and governed, although the tendency is to follow patterns in the local society; and,
- The cultural context has significant influence on how mission organisations are formed and governed. The GLOBE research project shows that cultural dimensions are highly influential on leadership styles and practice.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **EVANGELICAL MISSION MOVEMENTS IN BRAZIL**

Brazilian missions are a direct product of the historical development of Christian churches in the country, particularly from the 1970s onwards. The analysis of these mission movements will identify the internal, external and international factors that have determined the emergence and development of these organisations, making the country one of the leading missionary sending nations in the Global South.

This chapter focuses primarily on the emergence of Evangelical mission movements over the last four decades although other related topics will also be mentioned. The chapter is divided in five parts. The first is a brief historical review of Christian mission to Brazil and the establishment of Evangelical churches, describing the process of translation and contextualisation of Christianity in the country. This is important to set the context in which mission movements have been founded and relates to the internal and external factors that have contributed to this. One decisive external factor, the introduction of voluntary associations, is evaluated in the second part, with a discussion of political and sociological aspects in Brazilian society in which churches operate. The third part is an analysis of the emergence and development of Evangelical mission organisations. These are described in terms of church context, organisational models, strategy, leadership styles and sending structures. The particular case-studies, in part four, provide specific information on how different mission movements appear and function. In part five, the emergence and development of Evangelical mission movements are related to the key factors that have determined the existence of these movements, including the international influence that places Brazilian missions on the



global scene. The chapter ends with a brief conclusion that summarises the importance and influence of these factors in the Brazilian context.

## **1. History of Christian Missions to Brazil**

This historical review gives the background to the current situation of strong Evangelical presence in the country and to the many initiatives geared towards cross-cultural mission. Internal factors concerning church expansion and external factors related to political and socio-economic developments resulted in a synergetic growth of these movements. The tension between Roman Catholic and Protestant missions, and consequently their respective national churches, explains the development of the proactive evangelistic efforts, particularly from the Protestant side. Out of the Protestant presence the current Evangelical churches were founded.

### **1.1. Catholic Missions and the Portuguese**

The modern history of Brazil begins with the coming of Portuguese colonisers in 1500. Behind Portuguese efforts to reach known and unknown regions of the globe was, alongside economic and political aspirations, a messianic call to 'save the world'.<sup>1</sup> Enrique Dussel, stressing this messianic aspect and the attitude of superiority of the invaders, says that

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<sup>1</sup> Telmo, Antonio, *História Secreta de Portugal* [The Secret History of Portugal], 1997:103-104; Pessoa, Fernando, *Portugal, Sebastianismo e Quinto Império* [Portugal, Sebastianism and Fifth Empire], 1986:123,124

Our Latin American history began with the arrival of a handful of Hispanics who possessed, in addition to a national Messianism, an immense superiority over the Indian not only in regard to the instruments of civilisation but also in the coherence of their cultural structures.<sup>2</sup>

An important element in the 'messianic' or 'missionary' vision of Portugal and Spain was the understanding of being called to expand Christian civilisation and consequently Christian faith. This belief in vocation was strongly reinforced by the recognition of Rome, that has been known as *ius patronatus* (the right of Patronage), conceded to Iberian kings in the beginning of the thirteenth century. The twofold authority, to colonise and to evangelise, finds its parallel in the concept of 'Manifest Destiny' seen in Protestant mission movements in Britain and the United States, already discussed in Chapter Two.<sup>3</sup>

The Christian faith that invaded Brazil and the rest of Latin America was strongly tied to Iberian political power. According to Boff, evangelisation was not liberation of native people but a tool for oppression and death that served only European interests.<sup>4</sup> Catholic faith has dominated Latin American nations since then and in many countries has the status of being the official religion and state church, even if there has not always been a legal basis for this. Important developments have occurred within the Catholic Church in Brazil in more recent years owing to the Liberation Theology and Charismatic movements, resulting in a strong renewal in some local parishes and sectors of the Church.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Dussel, Enrique, *A History of the Church in Latin America*, 1981:27

<sup>3</sup> Cesar, Elbem, *História da Evangelização do Brasil* [The History of the Evangelisation of Brazil], 2000:19

<sup>4</sup> Boff, Leonardo, *América Latina: Da Conquista à Nova Evangelização* [Latin America: From Conquest to New Evangelisation], 1992:34

<sup>5</sup> Chesnut, Andrew, *Born Again in Brazil: The Pentecostal Boom and the Pathogens of Poverty*, 1997:3

## 1.2. Protestant Missions

It was only in the beginning of the nineteenth century, due to the immigration of Europeans from countries with strong Protestant churches (such as Germany, England, Sweden and the Netherlands) that Protestantism created roots in the country. During the entire colonial period the Catholic Church had a religious monopoly and did not allow the establishment of Protestant churches or of any other religious creed.

Brazil declared independence from Portugal in 1822 and the first Constitution (1891) considered Catholic faith as the state religion par excellence and the Roman Church as the only church maintained by the state, whilst giving freedom and political rights to other expressions of the Christian faith.<sup>6</sup> There was, however, still a restriction in terms of places of worship and of open evangelisation. Feeling more protected by the new Constitution, Protestants started churches, not only among immigrants but also among the native population. The result was a growing conflict with the Catholic Church that endured until the adoption of the 'dialogue strategy' of the Second Vatican Council in 1965.<sup>7</sup>

Apart from the lay leadership that came with immigrant groups from Europe, the first missionary to be sent to Brazil was the American Methodist Fountain Pitts, in 1835. In 1858, a Congregational church was established in Petrópolis by the Scottish physician Robert Kelly.<sup>8</sup> The Presbyterians came from the United States through Ashbel Green Simonton in 1859 and João Manoel da Conceição, a former Catholic priest who

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<sup>6</sup> Mendonça, Antônio Gouvêa, *O Celeste Porvir: A Inserção do Protestantismo no Brasil* [The Celestial Future: The Insertion of Protestantism in Brazil], 1984:21

<sup>7</sup> Cavalcanti, Robinson, *Cristianismo & Política* [Christianity & Politics], 1985:176

<sup>8</sup> Every-Clayton, Joyce, *Um Grão de Mostarda – Documentando os Inícios da Igreja Evangélica Pernambucana* [A Mustard Seed – Documenting the Beginnings of the Evangelical Church of Pernambuco], 1998:20

converted to Protestant faith in 1864 and became the first national pastor to be ordained by the Presbyterian Church. According to Read, his conversion to Protestantism encouraged foreign missionaries to be more aggressive in their preaching.<sup>9</sup>

A second wave of immigration started in 1865 with Americans coming from the South of the United States where people had suffered reduction in their living conditions after the Civil War.<sup>10</sup> The Pentecostal movement reached Brazil in 1910, first among the Italians in São Paulo, where a church called *Congregação Cristã do Brasil* was founded.<sup>11</sup> Assemblies of God came through the Swedish missionaries Gunnar Vingren and Daniel Berg in 1911.<sup>12</sup>

### 1.3. Republic and Emergence of Nationalism

The Constitution of 1891, the first of the Republic era, followed the North American model of a liberal federation of autonomous states. Abolition of slavery, which had already occurred in 1888, was confirmed, as well as separation of the Catholic Church from the State, giving religious liberty and right to civil registration of marriages.<sup>13</sup> The result was an even stronger competition between Evangelicals and Catholics.<sup>14</sup>

The revolution of 1930, led by Getúlio Vargas, initiated a time of strong nationalism and the political climate was reflected also among Evangelical churches. Although handover to national leadership had already occurred in some churches, a process of

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<sup>9</sup> Read, William, *Fermento Religioso nas Massas do Brasil* [Original title in English: New Patterns of Church Growth in Brazil], 1967:47-49; Cesar 2000:88

<sup>10</sup> Crabtree, A.R., *Historia dos Baptistas do Brasil* [History of the Baptists of Brazil], 1937:37-39

<sup>11</sup> César 2000:21-22

<sup>12</sup> Almeida, Abraão de (ed.), *História das Assembléias de Deus no Brasil* [History of the Assemblies of God in Brazil], 1982:13-18

<sup>13</sup> Martin, David, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America*, 1991:61-62

<sup>14</sup> Cavalcanti 1985:180-181

nationalisation started and an authoritarian leadership emerged, which created a model that has been emulated in many ecclesiastical organisations. During the period of strong nationalism, Protestant churches became independent from their 'mother churches' of origin and autochthonous mission structures were formed in order to evangelise neighbouring countries and indigenous tribes in the Amazon region.

The growth of the Evangelicals was now an important factor. Having comprised 0.58% of the population in 1938, they accounted for 3.26% in 1949 and 6.06% in 1961. The strongest growth was among Pentecostals, owing to their emphasis on lay leadership, focus on poorer areas in the larger cities and investment in schools.

#### **1.4. Military Regime and Christian Silence**

In order to prevent a 'communist revolution', a military regime took over power in 1964, a rule which lasted until 1985. In terms of democracy, the new regime was a regression and a defeat of liberal ideology. During the military regime, the Roman Catholic Church decided not to criticise the government, and rather to turn its attention to internal issues, dealing with its own identity and mission. The Second Vatican Council had put an end to the monolithic power of the Church, giving space for an open tension between vanguard movements and reactionary defenders of tradition. For Brazilian Catholic leadership there was little time for discussing the situation of the country and there was a feeling of gratitude for being saved from Communism.<sup>15</sup>

Military regimes had taken over power in the Southern Cone of South America and there was a growing dissatisfaction with a lack of social reforms and violation of human

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<sup>15</sup> Cavalcanti 1985:200

rights. Liberation Theology appeared in the 1960s, mainly among Catholic theologians in Latin America, including a few Protestants such as the Presbyterian Rúbem Alves in Brazil and the Methodist José Míguez Bonino in Argentina. The influence of Liberation Theology is later seen both in the way the Roman Catholic Church 'opted for the poor' and in the practical work of Latin American dioceses. Liberation Theology also had an impact in Evangelical circles and Pedro Arana, one of the founders of the Latin American Theological Fraternity, recognised that

The Theology of Liberation forced the Evangelicals to seriously consider the situation in which they live and proclaim the Gospel, to review their role in the transformation of this world, to read the Bible in a serious way and to reconsider their attitudes towards the revelation and the relation between the Gospel and the concrete realities, and to rethink the relation between faith and obedience.<sup>16</sup>

In this period, the attitude of Protestants was to avoid criticism against the military regime.<sup>17</sup> The emergence of Charismatic movements in the 1960s gave more fuel to Pentecostal churches and created divisions among historical churches. New denominations were formed based on an acceptance of Pentecostal expressions of faith. The tendency was, therefore, to stress the spiritual dimensions of life and ignore the social and political realities of society. In a climate of competition, churches assumed a position of self-defence, becoming more rigid, authoritarian, exclusivist, intolerant and repressive, emulating the regime.<sup>18</sup> In retribution, the regime favoured the silent churches, both Protestants and Catholics, providing benefits in the form of tax exemption and properties. The result was an even stronger expansion and growth of Evangelical churches in Brazil, with complete freedom to establish congregations, rent time on radio and television and to hold public meetings.

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<sup>16</sup> Pedro Arana, quoted by Cavalcanti 1985:209-210

<sup>17</sup> Martin 1991:66

<sup>18</sup> Cavalcanti 1985:203

A change in the attitude of some churches occurred in the second part of the 1970s as a result of the influence of Liberation Theology, discussions led by the World Council of Churches on politics and justice, and the holistic theology of the Lausanne Movement. The base communities, outcomes of Liberation Theology, were important to the democratisation process in Brazil, creating awareness among the poor about human rights and possible ways to change their situation.<sup>19</sup>

An important factor in understanding the development of a Latin American theology of mission is the influence of student movements in the 1950s and 1960s, linked to the so-called Ecumenical Protestantism and represented by para-ecclesiastical organisations such as ULAJE (Union of Latin American Protestant Youth), MEC (Student Christian Movement) and ISAL (Church and Society in Latin America).<sup>20</sup> ISAL is considered by Orlando Costas as the “most consistently radical Protestant ecumenical organisation in Latin America”, owing to ISAL’s request for coherence in mission and the central position of the church as the locus of mission.<sup>21</sup> One Brazilian theologian who was initially related to ISAL was Rúbem Alves. The emphasis of these student movements was the need for clear involvement by the Church in society, defining the mission of the church as ‘church-in-mission’. For José Míguez Bonino that means that “mission is the announcement and the making present of the Kingdom of God”.<sup>22</sup> The issue was to formulate a ‘theology of the people’ and not a ‘theology for the people’.<sup>23</sup> The cross-cultural aspect of mission was, however, considered in several of the conferences held

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<sup>19</sup> Cox, Harvey, *Religion in the Secular City – Towards a Postmodern Theology*, 1984:113-117

<sup>20</sup> Costas, Orlando, *Theology of the Crossroads in Contemporary Latin America*, 1976:49

<sup>21</sup> Costas 1976:199

<sup>22</sup> Míguez Bonino, José, quoted in Davies, Paul, *Faith Seeking Effectiveness – The Missionary Theology of José Míguez Bonino*, 2006:182

<sup>23</sup> Costas 1976:204

in Latin America even before the strong boom of missions in the 1970s and 1980s. One example was the Second Latin American Evangelical Conference in Lima 1961.<sup>24</sup>

### **1.5. Reestablishment of Democracy and Church Growth**

In 1974, a political opening began with the slow re-establishment of democracy. The confrontation between the Catholic Church and the State and the recrudescence of opposition parties and leaders, with support from outside, made it impossible for the military regime to continue with their rigidity and oppression of opponents.<sup>25</sup> General amnesty was given in 1979 to all political leaders who had been in exile and a law permitted the formation of new political parties. One of the parties immediately formed was the PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores - the Labour Party) with support from urban and rural unions, sectors of Catholic and Protestant churches and middle-class professionals. Four years later, a campaign for direct elections led to definitive defeat of the authoritarian regime and the democratisation process was a reality.<sup>26</sup>

The growth of Evangelical churches has continued, particularly amongst the Pentecostals. Martin says that there are numerous paths which the movement could take, such as the messianic movements of the interior that had established a tradition of dissidence, the brotherhoods that had introduced the idea of lay initiative, and the regional cult around Padre Cicero in the Northeast that had demanded ascetic standards of behaviour.<sup>27</sup> Other important factors are urbanisation alongside industrial development and poorer classes searching for better conditions as promised by

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<sup>24</sup> Conferencia Evangélica Latinoamericana, *Cristo la Esperanza para América Latina*, 1962:94

<sup>25</sup> Fausto, Boris, *A História do Brasil* [The History of Brazil], 2001:490

<sup>26</sup> Fausto 2001:504-510

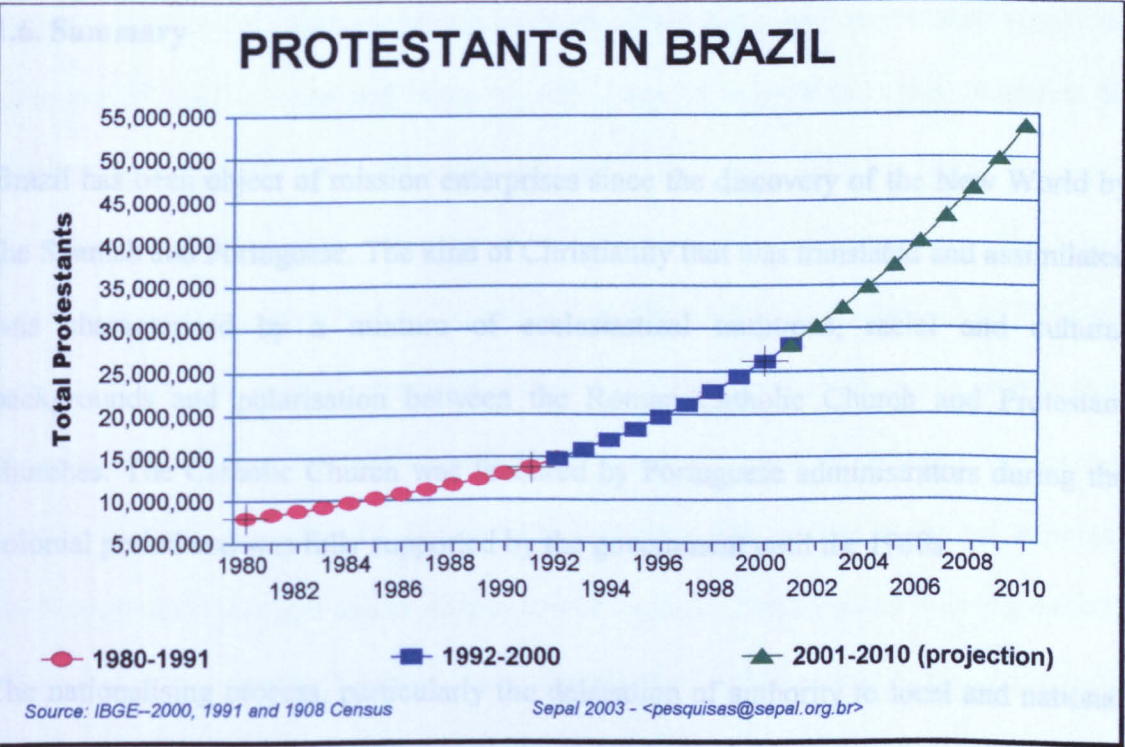
<sup>27</sup> Martin 1991:64



Pentecostal movements.<sup>28</sup> One significant emphasis of Pentecostal movements has been on ‘faith healing’, attracting many from the poorer population to Pentecostal churches as well as to Charismatic movements within Catholic churches.<sup>29</sup> In recent years, Pentecostal movements have used a strategy of mass-communication and strong confrontation towards other religious groups, both Christian and non-Christian.

According to the Serviço de Evangelização para a América Latina (SEPAL) the development of Evangelical churches from 1980 onwards (including a projection to 2010), can be seen in the following graph, which is based on official government statistics.<sup>30</sup>

Graph 2: Growth of Evangelicals/Protestants in Brazil from 1980 to 2010



<sup>28</sup> Gates, C.W., *Industrialization: Brazil's Catalyst for Church Growth*, 1972:47

<sup>29</sup> Chesnut 1997:6

<sup>30</sup> SEPAL is the Latin American branch of Overseas Crusade (OC) International (sepal.org)

Philip Jenkins, describing the characteristics of what he calls 'The Next Christendom', includes the growth of Christianity in Brazil, and especially of Pentecostal movements, as an important factor in understanding the changing scenario of religions today. In the global trend of growing churches in the South, he sees the rise of a new definition of Christianity, not necessarily in accordance with traditional understandings of Christian faith in the North.<sup>31</sup> Referring to the predictions of growth of Protestants in Brazil, he states that

The non-Catholic population has swelled so very quickly in recent years as to make any such predictions moot, and it would not be astonishing if Brazil by this stage was half-Protestant. That Brazil will be a key centre of world Christianity is beyond doubt, but the precise contours of its religious life are unknowable.<sup>32</sup>

## 1.6. Summary

Brazil has been object of mission enterprises since the discovery of the New World by the Spanish and Portuguese. The kind of Christianity that was translated and assimilated was characterised by a mixture of ecclesiastical traditions, racial and cultural backgrounds and polarisation between the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant churches. The Catholic Church was favoured by Portuguese administrators during the colonial period and was fully supported by the government until the 1960s.

The nationalising process, particularly the delegation of authority to local and national leadership, has been a major challenge for many mainstream churches in Brazil. One important factor for the spontaneous and rapid growth of Pentecostal movements was

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<sup>31</sup> Jenkins, Philip, *The New Christendom*, 2002:79-85

<sup>32</sup> Jenkins 2002:92

their propensity to hand over responsibility promptly to nationals. Leadership styles in emerging mission movements replicate, for the most, the centralised and authoritarian model seen in Brazilian society from the 1950s onwards. The centralisation of leadership in one person, or in a family, has favoured entrepreneurial initiatives and strong control; at the same time it has caused a tendency towards division and the multiplication of churches and mission organisations.

Evangelical churches started growing significantly in the 1960s with the rise of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements and the government's changing attitude towards religious pluralism. The economic growth of the country in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly in urban centres, gave mainstream middle-class churches a new financial power with possibilities for investing in expansion within and outside the country. Pentecostal churches among working classes have also experienced significant increase of their income and being usually large in membership their potential for supporting missionary activities has augmented.

Most churches were founded with the explicit objective of expanding to all Brazilian states and the evangelistic emphasis was a main characteristic of local congregations from the beginning. Competition with Catholicism, and later, Spiritism, together with rivalry between the different Evangelical churches, has proved to be an important motivation for expansion and establishment of local congregations all over the country. The mission movements that have emerged since the 1970s are closely linked to the fast growth of Evangelical churches and the freedom to establish voluntary associations provided by the democratisation process, particularly from the 1980s on.

From the historical examination it becomes clear that both internal and external factors have influenced the expansion in Evangelical circles. The mission movements are thus part of a growing sphere of Evangelicalism and fully integrated in a society closely connected to the developments occurring within its environment.

## **2. Voluntary Associations in Brazilian Society**

There are examples of voluntary associations in the early history of Brazil, particularly those of a religious character. Catholic orders were the first to be established in the country through the arrival of Jesuits, Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites and Benedictines. The Constitution of 1946 gave legal basis to the existence of labour unions and confirmed democratic rights to vote for both women and men.<sup>33</sup> Religious liberty and pluralistic ideology were important characteristics of Brazilian society in the second half of the twentieth century, although the military coup in 1964 resulted in restrictions for political parties and organisations working for human rights. Other voluntary associations kept their freedom to exist, providing that they did not criticise the government. Nevertheless, in the 1960s and 1970s, NGOs and other voluntary groups represented a form of political action against authoritarianism.<sup>34</sup>

The development of the so-called 'Third Sector' of society occurred primarily in the 1980s and 1990s with a more stable democratisation process. The Third Sector now includes all kind of philanthropic organisations such as foundations, institutes, entities

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<sup>33</sup> Fausto 2001:351, 401

<sup>34</sup> Thompson, Andrés A., 'Do Compromisso à Eficiência? - Os Caminhos do Terceiro Setor na América Latina' [From Commitment to Efficiency? – The Paths of the Third Sector in Latin America], in Ioschpe, Evelyn Berg (org.), *3.o Setor – Desenvolvimento Social Sustentado* [Third Sector – Sustainable Social Development], 2005:43

for social services, religious bodies, NGOs, community associations and other organisations defending human and civil rights.<sup>35</sup> According to official statistics of 2002, the number of institutions is over half a million.<sup>36</sup>

Mission movements have been founded both within existent church structures and as 'para-church' organisations. In order to keep their status of non-profit organisations and consequently enjoy tax exemptions, any mission organisation has to prove their voluntary foundation and philanthropic activity. Most have integrated relief work into their missionary enterprise and in many cases related NGOs have been founded in order to separate administration of social projects from any church planting ministry.

Voluntarism is expressed particularly through financial support and voluntary service. Both denominational and inter-denominational mission organisations emphasise the importance of commitment and sacrifice for the sake of expanding the Christian message.<sup>37</sup>

### 3. Emergence of Evangelical Mission Movements

The growth of Evangelical churches in Brazil has resulted in the expansion of missionary activity outside the country as well. Brazil is today one of the leading NSCs involved in cross-cultural mission. In the same way as ecclesiastical structures and

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<sup>35</sup> Dias, Reinaldo, *Fundamentos de Sociologia Geral* [Foundations of General Sociology], 2000:238; Cardoso, Ruth, 'Fortalecimento da Sociedade Civil' [Strengthening of the Civil Society] in Ioschpe, Evelyn Berg (org.), *3.º Setor – Desenvolvimento Social Sustentado* [Third Sector – Sustainable Social Development], 2005:8

<sup>36</sup> 'As Fundações Privadas e Associações sem Fins Lucrativos no Brasil 2002' [Private Foundations and Non-Profit Associations in Brazil 2002] (Rio de Janeiro: IPEA e IBGE, 2004 – quoted in [pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terceiro\\_setor](http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terceiro_setor))

<sup>37</sup> For examples, see the four case studies of Brazilian mission organisations later in this chapter

models were translated into the Brazilian context and a process of contextualisation created national churches, the development of mission movements has reflected the foreign missionary venture in the country, whilst searching for contextualised forms and expressions. Internal, external and international factors have contributed to this as the analysis will show.

### 3.1. Autochthonous Mission Movements

The first mission structures that emerged in Brazil were denominational mission organisations. Still under the leadership of foreign missionaries, historical churches started to evangelise not only the neighbourhood but also other regions and nations. The immediate target areas outside Brazil were Portuguese and Spanish speaking nations, with Portugal as the priority.

In 1890, the Mission for Evangelisation of Brazil and Portugal was founded within Congregational churches and the first missionaries were sent out to Portugal in 1895.<sup>38</sup> The Brazilian Baptist Convention was established in 1907 and in the same year the denomination decided to help missionary work in Chile financially.<sup>39</sup> In 1910, both Baptists and Presbyterians sent their first missionaries to Portugal.<sup>40</sup> The inter-denominational mission agencies were few during the first half of the twentieth century. Exceptions were the Caiua Evangelical Mission, which started in 1928, and the Amazonia Evangelical Mission, founded in 1948; both had the purpose of engaging in evangelising among Indian tribes. From the 1950s onwards, several international

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<sup>38</sup> Silva Jr, Ismael da, *Notas Históricas sobre a Missão Evangelizadora do Brasil e Portugal* [Historical Notes about the Mission for Evangelisation of Brazil and Portugal], 1960:7

<sup>39</sup> Reis Pereira, José dos (ed.), *Informativo Histórico da Junta de Missões da Convenção Batista Brasileira*. [Documents on the History of the Mission Board of the Brazilian Baptist Convention], 1997:1

<sup>40</sup> Burns, Barbara, 'O Gigante Começa a Despertar' [The Giant is Wakening Up] in the Portuguese version of Tucker, Ruth, "....*Até os Confins da Terra*" [From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya], 1986:517- 518



missions established sending structures in Brazil such as Youth for Christ in 1952 and New Tribes in 1953.<sup>41</sup> It was not until 1972 that the first autochthonous agency was formed, Betel Brasileiro [Brazilian Bethel], followed by Missão Antioquia [Antioch Mission] in 1976. The emergence of missionary movements increased in the 1980s and 1990s and the number continues to grow.

The foundation of Protestant mission organisations in Brazil during the twentieth century can be represented by the following graph, based on data collected by SEPAL.<sup>42</sup>

**Graph 3: Year of Foundation of Mission Organisations in Brazil**



There were several reasons for this growing interest in missions from the 1950s onwards. Political stability and the military regime's acquiescence in the promotion of evangelism and mission gave space for expansion of churches in the country as well as in other countries. Strong support from the United States towards the right-wing economic system facilitated financial investment by international agencies in Latin

<sup>41</sup> Limpic, Ted, *Catálogo de Juntas e Agências Missionárias no Brasil* [Brazil Mission Handbook], Editions of 1995, 1996 and 2000

<sup>42</sup> SEPAL, website (Infobrasil.org), 2005

America. It was also the beginning of a trans-national globalisation affecting Brazil, including the development of global mission networks and agencies.

One element that caused a change in the previously introverted mentality of Evangelical churches in Brazil was the arrival of inter-denominational and international mission agencies such as Operation Mobilisation. These had an important role in promoting cross-cultural missions, particularly through recruiting young people for international teams. Another important factor was the promotion of conferences on evangelisation and mission, particularly in the early 1950s.<sup>43</sup> Samuel Escobar confirms the important role of these events, in preparing a new generation of Latin American evangelicals for the expansion of Evangelicalism through evangelisation and missionary work.<sup>44</sup>

The effects of the Lausanne Conference on World Evangelisation held in 1974 were felt in Brazil. The strong emphasis on integral mission, seen in both the conference proceedings and the literature that followed, created an impact on Evangelical churches. Some Brazilian leaders linked to the Intervarsity Movement attended the conference and took the initiative to promote a national conference on the same theme in 1976. One of the outcomes of the conference in Curitiba was the upsurge of a new ecclesiastical leadership with an inclination towards global evangelisation.<sup>45</sup>

Also in 1976, the Mission Information Bureau in São Paulo organised a meeting for pastors and denominational leaders with the purpose of discussing the involvement of

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<sup>43</sup> Personal interview with Lidia de Almeida Menezes in June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1997

<sup>44</sup> Escobar, Samuel, *Desafios da Igreja na América Latina* [Challenges for the Church in Latin América], 1997:11

<sup>45</sup> See texts in Steuernagel, Valdir, ed., *Jesus Cristo: Senhorio, Propósito, Missão* [Jesus Christ: Lordship, Purpose, Mission], 1978



Brazilian churches in world evangelisation.<sup>46</sup> This meeting was the first step towards the creation of the Brazilian Association of Cross-Cultural Missions (AMTB), the entity that brings together Evangelical mission organisations in the country.

A decisive contribution towards the development of mission movements was the encouragement of foreign missionaries. One such example was UK representative of WEC International, Leslie Brierley.<sup>47</sup> The Mission Commission of World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) was also present in the process, mainly through the executive director Theodore Williams of India. He visited Brazil several times in the 1970s and 1980s, pushing for a deeper engagement of Brazilian churches in Asia and other less evangelised regions of the world.

A national leadership of mission movements was formed in the 1970s as a result of all these elements: mission conferences, the encouragement from a new generation of foreign missionaries and their emphasis on mission, the arrival of international missions to Brazil and the new sentiment in Evangelical churches of having the potential to reach out to other nations with the Gospel. Jonathan dos Santos, founder and leader of the Antioch Mission, wrote in an article in 1978:

Specialists in mission, both Brazilians and of other nationalities, have verified in these last years that Brazil is becoming a strong centre for global mission. It is possible that Brazil will be one of the largest senders of missionaries in the world in the coming years. Brazil has to emerge from being a mission field to become a missionary nation.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> The information is based on a personal interview with Diane Betchel in June 1997 and a personal letter from William Hewlett in January 1998

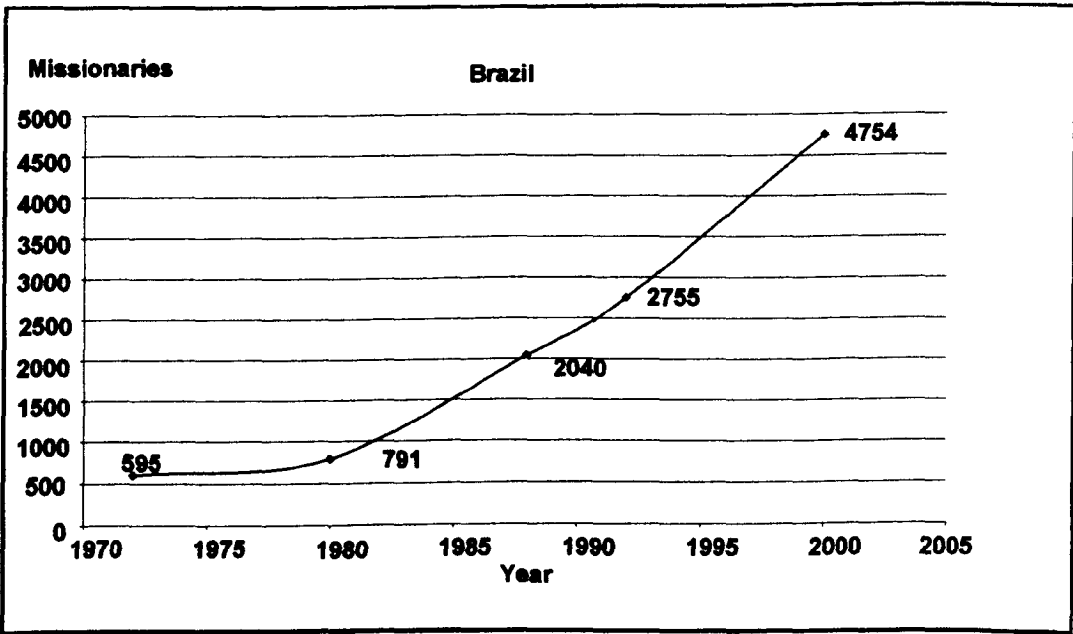
<sup>47</sup> Information given by Robert Harvey, staff member of WEC, in a personal interview in June 1997

<sup>48</sup> Santos, Jonathan dos, 'De Campo Missionário a Força Missionária' [From Mission Field to Mission Force] in *Ultimato*, November 1978

Since the 1980s nationwide mission conferences have been organised by Evangelicals focusing on mission. Some of the most important have been the Congresses of Evangelisation in Belo Horizonte 1983 and Brasilia 2003, COMIBAM in São Paulo 1987, and the Brazilian Mission Congresses in Caxambu 1993, in Guarapari 1998, in Águas de Lindóia 2001, 2005 and 2008.

The number of Evangelical missionaries from Brazil has increased significantly since the 1970s, as seen in Graph 4.<sup>49</sup> These statistics show the strong growth in the number of missionaries from 1980 onwards with particular acceleration from the 1990s. It took some years for the newly founded missions to have their sending structures in place, explaining the retardation in number of cross-cultural personnel.

**Graph 4: Number of Brazilian missionaries, 1972 to 2000**



<sup>49</sup> The statistics are from: Ref. 1972, 1980 and 1988 from Pate, Larry, *From Every People* (1989); Ref. 1993 from Johnstone 1993; Ref. 2000 from Johnstone and Mandryk 2001

### 3.2. Characteristics of Mission Movements

Mission structures in Brazil tend to emulate the traditional models represented by the mission organisations that came to Latin America, owing to the translation process of missionary enterprise. In the 1970s, a national leadership started to take over responsibility for international missions with a base in Brazil. National initiatives, that began to appear in the same period, were intended to be alternatives for mission candidates who were not directly linked to denominations with sending structures, or did not wish to be part of international teams through multinational mission agencies. The application requirements for national missions were not significantly different from international ones, except in terms of knowledge of English and the amount of financial support necessary. In the 1980s, a new kind of mission structure was seen among mission movements in Brazil. Following a North American trend, local churches started to send out missionaries, creating their own sending bodies. This coincided with a decreasing confidence in traditional structures and a criticism of organisational models having stagnated, especially in the denominations.<sup>50</sup>

A slightly different category of inter-denominational mission is exemplified by A Missão de Evangelização Mundial (AMEM). It started as a receiving structure for foreign missionaries to work in Brazil. Discovering that there were no sending agencies besides a few denominational boards, and that a growing number of young people in Brazilian churches had a desire to work abroad, the leadership of AMEM decided that the mission should channel candidates from Brazil directly to other nations, without the requirement of going through the international office of WEC. Operation Mobilization,

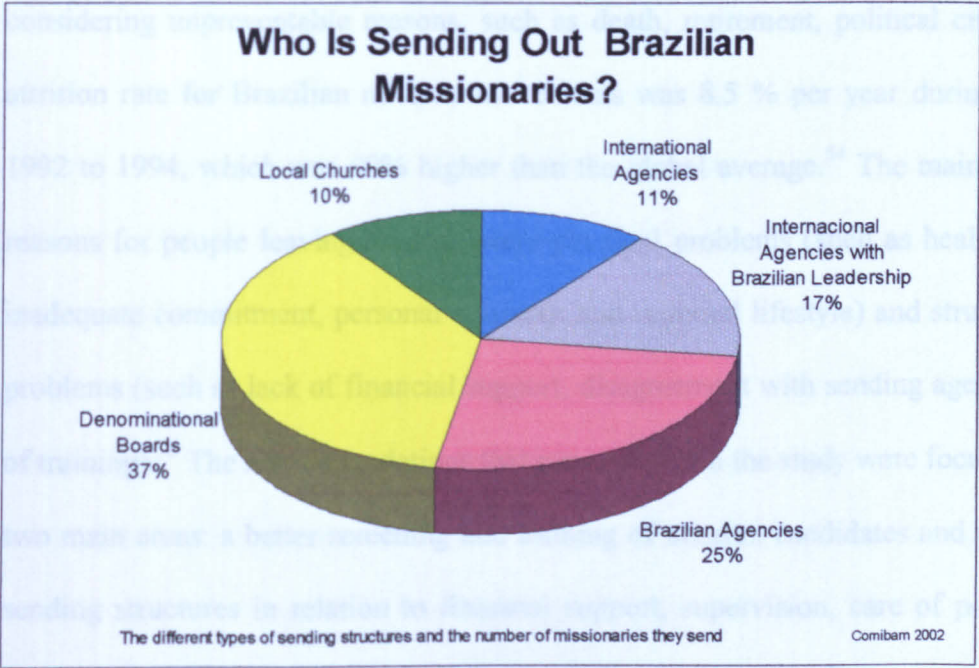
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<sup>50</sup> This is seen, among others, in the formation of the Antioch Mission referred to in the Brazilian case studies

Youth with a Mission and Wycliffe Bible Translators have since followed the same pattern.

In 2002, Brazilian missionaries working cross-culturally were sent out through the following types of mission structures:<sup>51</sup>

**Graph 5: Percentage of missionaries sent by different mission structures**



The SEPAL survey, based on statistics collected from one hundred mission organisations, shows that the extent to which denominational boards had lost ground by 2002. From having sent out almost 100% of the missionaries up to the 1970s and 52% in 1995, the percentage in 2002 was only 37%. International agencies stood for 28% of the missionary force, with a growing number being under national leadership. Inter-

<sup>51</sup> Survey by Ted Limpic, SEPAL, in 2002 and presented in the *Catálogo de Juntas e Agências Missionárias no Brasil* [Brazil Mission Handbook], 2005:60

denominational agencies with national background stood behind 25% of the missionaries and local churches were directly responsible for 10%.<sup>52</sup>

Due to a rumour that Brazilian mission movements were losing a great number of missionaries who were leaving mission fields prematurely, an attrition study was done in 1996.<sup>53</sup> The study asked mission leaders about statistics related to attrition cases and perceived reasons why people left cross-cultural ministries before the planned time. Not considering unpreventable reasons, such as death, retirement, political crises, etc, the attrition rate for Brazilian mission movements was 8.5 % per year during the period 1992 to 1994, which was 50% higher than the global average.<sup>54</sup> The main preventable reasons for people leaving mission were personal problems (such as health problems, inadequate commitment, personal concerns and immoral lifestyle) and structure-related problems (such as lack of financial support, disagreement with sending agency and lack of training).<sup>55</sup> The recommendations that came out from the study were focused on these two main areas: a better screening and training of mission candidates and a revision of sending structures in relation to financial support, supervision, care of personnel and continuous communication between home staff and mission workers.

By and large, Brazilian mission organisations have initially chosen to send people to ethnic minorities within the country (such as Indian tribes), neighbouring countries in South America, countries with linguistic proximity (such as Portugal, Angola and Mozambique), and the Brazilian diaspora in North America and Europe. Portugal was

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<sup>52</sup> The figure for 1995 is taken from the *Brazil Mission Handbook*, edition of 1995 by Ted Limpic

<sup>53</sup> The initiative of this study was taken by the Mission Commission of World Evangelical Alliance and the survey was done in 14 countries, including Brazil, focusing on the attrition during the years 1992 to 1994. The results were published in Taylor, William, ed., *Too Valuable to Lose – Exploring the Causes and Cures of Missionary Attrition*, 1997

<sup>54</sup> Taylor 1997:148; Hay, Rob et al., eds., *Worth Keeping – Global Perspective on Best Practice in Missionary Retention*, 2007:20

<sup>55</sup> Taylor 1997:149

the main mission field for denominational missions up to the 1970s, closely followed by neighbouring countries in South America. The objective of missionary work was primarily to plant churches with the same denominational matrix. International missions that established offices in the country focused more on Indian tribes and on recruiting personnel for international teams.

In more recent years, both denominational and inter-denominational mission organisations have started to send missionaries to other countries in Africa, Asia, Middle East and Eastern Europe. The situation in 2005 was that 25% of the cross-cultural missionaries worked in Brazil, 34% in other Portuguese and Spanish speaking countries, 20% in the so-called '10/40 Window'<sup>56</sup> and 21% in sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and North America.<sup>57</sup>

The Antioch Mission was one of the first mission organisations to consider a longer course for preparing people for cultural adaptation. Others have followed and there are currently more than twenty of those specialised 'mission courses' in the country, apart from the missiology subjects taught in theological seminaries and faculties.<sup>58</sup>

#### 4. Case Studies of Mission Movements

In order to have clearer insight into Brazilian mission movements, four case studies are presented, based on personal interviews, material published by the mission organisation

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<sup>56</sup> The '10/40 Window' refers to the regions on the eastern hemisphere located between 10 and 40 degrees, that has least access to the Christian message. The term was launched by the AD 2000 Movement and Beyond

<sup>57</sup> Statistics from SEPAL, collected by Ted Limpic, *Catálogo de Juntas e Agências Missionárias no Brasil* [Brazil Mission Handbook], and published in the website (Infobrasil.org)

<sup>58</sup> Windsor, Raymond, ed., *World Directory of Missionary Training Programmes*, 1995:21-40

and personal observation in direct contact with these missions. The four organisations have been chosen because they represent basic models of missions in Evangelical churches in Brazil.

- The first is a mainstream church, the Brazilian Baptist Convention, one of the largest Evangelical denominations in the country, which has its origin in foreign mission initiatives from the United States.
- The second is an international inter-denominational mission, WEC International, which has been one of the most influential agencies in promoting cross-cultural mission in the country.
- The third is one of the ‘faith missions’, the Antioch Mission, typifying the mission organisations that were started by nationals from the 1970s onwards.
- The fourth is a Pentecostal missionary church structure, the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, which has grown to be one of the largest New Pentecostal movements in Brazil started by nationals.

#### **4.1. The Brazilian Baptist Convention<sup>59</sup>**

The first national Baptist church was started in 1882 by missionaries from the Southern Baptist Convention in the United States. Twenty-five years later the Brazilian Baptist Convention was founded and a national leadership was elected. In the inaugural 1907 Assembly the mission departments for foreign mission (Junta de Missões Mundiais – JMM) and for home mission (Junta de Missões Nacionais – JMN) were organised.

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<sup>59</sup> Primary sources for the in-depth case study are: 1. Personal interview with Waldemiro Timchak, executive director of the JMM, in June 2005; 2. Questionnaire filled out by Timchak in September 2004; 3. A historical paper written by Timchak in October 1993; 4. The official strategy plans for the JMM for 1996 to 2000 and for 2000 to 2005, presented in the General Assemblies of 1996 respectively 2000; and, 5. The *Jornal de Missões* [Mission Magazine] of the JMM of May/June 2005 with historical articles

The American missionaries had the vision of establishing a national church that would be able to send missionaries to other parts of the country and abroad. In 1907, a decision was made by the JMM to take part in missionary work in Chile and in Portugal. The national development was led by William Bagby (the first American missionary to arrive in 1881) and Baptist churches were founded throughout Brazil. David Gomes, a Brazilian pastor, replaced Bagby and took the initiative to reach the northern part of Brazil, including the Amazonas and Para states.

Portugal was the prime mission field for three decades. In the 1940s the first missionaries were sent to Bolivia, following the construction of the railroad in the lowlands near the Brazilian border. In 1964, the mission work started in Paraguay and in the second half of the 1970s missionaries were placed in Uruguay, Venezuela, Italy, Spain, Angola and Mozambique. The interest in Africa began with information about new nations being formed and former colonies being freed from the colonising countries. In 1979, the Brazilian Baptist Convention had fifty-three missionaries in eleven countries. All of these were Portuguese or Spanish speaking countries, with the exception of Italy and France.

Important factors in the pioneer stage of the denomination were the missionary education that children and teenagers received in local churches and the involvement of women through local women's departments for mission. Mission conferences held by the denomination and by the international Baptist Union were also vital for the development of missionary work. One of these was the international gathering of Baptists in Rio de Janeiro in 1950. Campaigns called 'Christ, the only hope', organised by Ruben Lopes, had a strong impact on local churches causing the enrolment of many



people into the churches and leading to a dynamic reaching out to the Americas and to the rest of the world.

There was a change of leadership in the JMM in 1979, when Waldemiro Timchak was appointed mission director. A new emphasis was brought in with a strategy of the so-called 'unreached people groups' (UPGs). In the 1980s the language barrier was broken and a strong development took place directed towards new regions of the world such as China and India. At the same time, the national base was established and investments were made in the central structure in order to give missionaries better support. The financial participation of local churches in missionary work was encouraged as well as voluntary individual donations and service. The fact that Baptist theological seminaries did not place emphasis upon mission at that time made it even more important for the mission department to work directly with local churches and pastors.

During recent years the number of missionaries and countries represented has increased significantly. In 1993 there were 140 missionaries in twenty-seven countries; in 1997, 458 missionaries in thirty-five countries; and in 2000, 513 missionaries in thirty-eight countries. In 2005, there were over 600 missionaries working in fifty countries.

According to Timchak, some of the factors that gave impulse for expansion and success of mission work within the Brazilian Baptist Convention are:

- The new emphasis on the Majority World from 1980 onwards, showing the need for both evangelistic and social work among poorer countries;
- Eastern Europe became a new challenge and local churches decided to support missionaries in former Communist countries;

- A plan to ‘adopt’ missionaries was launched, encouraging local churches to support and be responsible for a particular missionary;
- In recent years a new concept of missionary was introduced: the autochthonous fieldworker. Instead of sending missionaries from Brazil to other countries, national missionaries are being supported by Brazilian churches;
- The cooperation with Baptist churches in other countries has been an important element in increasing the number of missionaries. The costs for missionaries are divided between sending and receiving churches;
- A new project engaging young people called ‘Radical Mission’ has also motivated churches to participate. Short term teams of young people are sent out with support of their local churches, without the requirement of the formal education normally expected for mission candidates;
- The example given by pioneer missionaries coming from North America and Europe;
- The global emphasis among Evangelical Christians on the UPGs and on the ‘10/40 Window’;
- The improving financial situation in Brazil from the second half of the 1980s onwards; and,
- The ‘discovery’ of the international scene with humanitarian and social needs becoming apparent in countries within Africa and Asia, and the liberty to enter regions that were previously closed to Western religious organisations.

The JMM offers a 14-months training course for missionary candidates on mission strategy and cross-cultural adaptation, including theory and practice. The requirements for becoming a candidate and attending the course are professional and theological

education, in addition to being a member of a Baptist church and having a recommendation from the pastor.

Success is measured primarily in terms of the number of established churches on the mission fields, the number of baptisms and growth in membership. Occasionally, the impact of social and educational projects is mentioned in reports and in the official magazine of the JMM.<sup>60</sup>

#### **4.2. WEC International and AMEM<sup>61</sup>**

WEC International was begun by Charles T. Studd of England who sailed for Africa in 1913 with a desire to reach the unreached with the Christian message. His motto 'If Jesus Christ be God and died for me then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him', became the slogan for the organisation he started and for the many branches established throughout the world WEC is currently active in seventy-six countries and has more than 1,700 missionaries from forty-nine nations.

AMEM (A Missão de Evangelização Mundial), the Brazilian branch of WEC, was founded in 1957 by Canadian missionaries Frank and Anne Reed. WEC missionary Leslie Brierley, already mentioned in this chapter, made an important contribution in advancing a missionary concern among Brazilian churches, publishing information about global mission and encouraging national congregations to send missionaries abroad.

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<sup>60</sup> The Mission Department of the Brazilian Baptist Convention publishes a monthly magazine called *Jornal de Missões* [Mission Magazine] with reports from missionaries, presentation of projects and encouragement to financial and prayer support

<sup>61</sup> The primary sources for the in-depth study are: 1. Personal interview with Robert Harvey in June 1997; 2. Information from WEC International website ([wec-int.org](http://wec-int.org)); 3. Information from AMEM website ([amem.org.br](http://amem.org.br)); and, 4. Statistics from SEPAL – ([Infobrasil.org](http://Infobrasil.org))

AMEM suffered a significant change in 1974 under the leadership of Robert Harvey from Australia. The emphasis had been in planting churches, which also Harvey engaged in during his first period in the country. However, knowing about Brierley's vision and perceiving the new-born interest for mission among Brazilian churches, Harvey took the initiative to promote courses and conferences in mission. One of these was a conference at the theological seminary in Belo Horizonte in 1976 in which Jonathan dos Santos, founder of the Antioch Mission, participated. The increasing interest for cross-cultural ministry produced a growing number of candidates for missionary work, who required training and sending structures. As a result AMEM became an inter-denominational training and sending base for Brazilian missionaries.

The basic principles for AMEM are faith, sacrifice, holiness and fellowship, building upon those adopted by the organisation internationally. These principles emphasise both the commitment to advancing the cause of Christian faith and the voluntary aspect of the mission. As a 'faith mission' missionaries are expected to raise their own support and not depend on the organisation for maintenance. People offer time and financial resources to the mission on a voluntary basis. The core values also reveal the basic motives behind the engagement in mission:

- To bring the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to the remaining unreached peoples with the utmost urgency;
- To demonstrate the compassion of Christ to a needy world;
- To plant churches where there are none and equip them; and,
- To mobilise and train cross-cultural workers.

AMEM has three categories of personnel: part-time, associates and career missionaries. Part-time missionaries are usually professionals working through their specialised skills on specific projects and for short-term engagement. Associates are long-term missionaries giving part of their time to ministries related to AMEM. Career missionaries are long-term and involved in AMEM related projects full-time.

The mission requires pre-field training of four months at their own base in order to integrate the candidate in the 'AMEM family' and give the needed cross-cultural orientation. Prior to taking this course, the future missionaries should have done their professional and theological education.

In 2005, AMEM reported that eighty-seven cross-cultural missionaries from Brazil were working in international teams in twenty-five countries. Since 2004 Jose Rosifran Macedo has been the director of the mission, being the first national to occupy that position. The success of the mission is counted primarily in terms of the number of missionaries sent cross-culturally, of churches planted in other nations and of national leaders who have been trained.

#### **4.3. The Antioch Mission<sup>62</sup>**

The Antioch Mission (Missão Antioquia) was founded in 1976 by Jonathan dos Santos, Decio de Azevedo and Barbara Burns, three seminary teachers at a Presbyterian Theological School in the northern part of the Parana state. Burns had come as a missionary to Brazil in 1969 and started a prayer group among students, focusing on

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<sup>62</sup> Primary sources for the in-depth study are: 1. Personal interview with Jonathan dos Santos and Decio de Azevedo in July 1997; 2. Questionnaire filled out by Silas Tostes in March 2003; 3. Materials from the General Assemblies of 1995 and 2003; and, 4. Printed material on the history of the Antioch Mission

missionary work inside and outside Brazil. This prayer group sparked a new 'mission vision' among students and teachers at the seminary.

Santos' interest in mission was strongly influenced by a mission conference in Belo Horizonte held by the Theological Seminary belonging to the National Baptist Convention, where a former missionary to Portugal was the principal. Santos also attended the Lausanne Conference for World Evangelisation in Switzerland, in 1974. The impact of these conferences and the teaching of Burns at his own seminary, were, according to Santos, decisive for changing his attitude towards cross-cultural mission. Santos eventually became one of the main leaders of Evangelical mission movements in Brazil and one of the founders of the Brazilian Association of Cross-cultural Missions (AMTB).

The incipient concern for mission among Evangelical churches was not enough to back up national initiatives. Without support for starting a mission department within the denomination, and going through a process of Pentecostal revival that distanced him from the leaders of his own denomination, Santos decided to start the agency together with Burns and Azevedo. In 1980 they moved to São Paulo, where there were more opportunities to develop the mission. During the early years the office was in the centre of Sao Paulo and in 1983 a property was acquired in order to establish a mission centre and theological school. The mission has grown and the Association of the Valley of Blessings, as it is called today, includes the mission agency Antioquia, the theological seminary, a local church, an institution working with street children, a publishing house, a farm for alcohol-addicts and ex-prisoners and a restaurant.

Santos summarises the main reasons for starting the mission as:

- Lack of openness and vision for mission in his denomination;
- The impact of conferences on mission in Brazil and abroad;
- The prayer group in the seminary led by Barbara Burns;
- A need for a national structure for sending missionaries out of Brazil;
- The need for a mission organisation with a holistic approach to the missionary work;
- The guidance of God in searching the best way to engage in mission;
- The awareness of the responsibility of Brazilian churches in taking part in global evangelisation;
- The fact that Brazil had received missionaries from other nations for many years, putting Brazilians in debt to the rest of the world in terms of sharing the Gospel; and,
- The growth of Brazilian churches with enormous potential for mission.

The mission was started as a 'faith mission' according to the model seen in the United States. One important element was the involvement of local churches, giving full financial support to their missionaries. The mission did not take any percentage of the missionary support for administration and depended exclusively on voluntary service and offerings from churches and individuals. The Antioch Mission is in that sense a truly voluntary association.

Alongside the personal motivation for engaging in mission, Santos acknowledges the external factors that influenced the establishment and development of the mission. Brazil's difficult financial situation during the 1970s and 1980s meant that starting and building a mission organisation demanded courage and energy. The property was primarily acquired through the donation of a businessman and the first buildings were

financed by selling part of the property to people who wanted to live in the neighbourhood of the mission. Opportunities to travel outside Brazil and attend conferences in other countries, thus gaining a true picture of other nations, were also important factors in the motivation for starting the mission. The presence of foreign missionaries with a desire to see Brazilian churches engaging in mission fostered a generation of national leaders with a vision for cross-cultural ministry.

The success of the Antioch Mission has depended on several factors. Santos and the new mission director, Silas Tostes, mention the following:

- The broadness and openness of the mission as a channel for mission candidates from different denominations;
- The hard work of the pioneers and the voluntary work of many people during the early years. The majority of people involved in the mission is still voluntary, including teachers and administrative personnel;
- The partnership with other mission organisations within and outside Brazil, although, cooperation has not always been easy, especially when organisations in the North require the same level of financial support for Southern missionaries as their own members;
- The fact that the mission has not followed a Western model of creating a sending structure; and,
- The close link to local sending churches, with missionaries being directly supported by them and not by the mission.

The first missionary was sent to Portugal in 1977 and the second mission field was Mozambique some years later. In 1983, when the mission moved to its own property



outside São Paulo, a training program for mission candidates was started. The 18-month mission training course is divided into six months of seminars and one year of supervised practice in a neighbouring country. The candidates are required to have either a professional or a theological education prior to the course. This pre-field training has given the missionaries tools for contextualisation in other cultures and understanding of other religions.

The main areas of ministry are church planting, church development, theological education and social projects. In many places missionaries cooperate with local churches and organisations and strategic partnerships are emphasised by the leadership of the mission today. These are important both for maximising the use of resources and for showing a spirit of unity among Christians.

Today the Antioch Mission has around a hundred missionaries working in twenty different countries. The growth of the organisation and inclusion of sectors other than the sending agency have turned the association into a complex structure demanding professional administration. The number of missionaries has levelled out over the last few years and some of the regional offices in other countries have been closed due to lack of finances and voluntary personnel. A restructuring of the mission began recently, aiming for a further development and a stronger base for continuous growth. The mission continues to be a 'faith mission', approving every year a budget 'by faith' without having promises and commitments from churches and individuals for all planned investments and expected costs.

Santos handed over the leadership of the mission to his son-in-law, Silas Tostes, twenty-five years after the foundation. Family members have been involved in the

administration of the mission, giving continuity to the founder's vision. Nevertheless, non-family members have been invited to participate in various functions of responsibility within the mission. The current direction of the organisation is towards a broader organisational form with a higher number of associates being represented in the yearly general assembly and in the mission board. The diversification of ministries has allowed the overall organisation to grow but also to divert resources and personnel into other areas that do not have the initial missionary focus. From measuring success in relation to the number of missionaries on field and churches planted in other nations, progress is also seen today in the growth of educational and social projects.

#### **4.4. The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God - IURD**

The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, IURD (Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus), is one of the new-Pentecostal churches in Brazil. Founded by Bishop Edir Macedo in 1977, it has grown to be one of the larger Evangelical movements with local congregations all over Brazil and in 115 other countries. Edir Macedo started as a street preacher in Rio de Janeiro and belonged for some time to another Pentecostal movement, called Casa da Bênção (House of Blessing). Through his sermons at open air meetings, a group of people gathered around him, forming the embryo to the IURD. An old theatre was hired for services and after some time the group moved to their own building and the church was legally registered. New congregations emerged in the Rio area and in 1980 the first congregation was started in the United States. After eight years of existence the IURD had already 195 church buildings spread over fourteen Brazilian states and in the Federal District, Brasilia. The numbers are difficult to verify but according to the IURD leadership it is estimated that there are between ten and

fifteen million members.<sup>63</sup> More credible statistics give a figure of between two and five million.<sup>64</sup> The success of the IURD is due to several factors:

- A well planned strategy for expansion, including strong emphasis on urban areas, leadership training, acquisition of properties in central parts of the cities, and use of media for outreach;
- A message strongly based on the needs of marginalised people in the society such as healing, miracles, exorcism, prayer for jobs, providing solutions to problems and financial prosperity;
- An ability to integrate cultural elements of popular religiosity into the services and the teaching;
- An aggressive evangelisation focusing primarily on the Catholic Church and on different kinds of Spiritism; and
- An entrepreneurial way of administering the church, with its own TV channel, many radio stations, publishing house, and placing demands upon the local leaders not only to be self-sufficient but also to make a profit that can go towards the central administration of the Church.

These characteristics of the IURD have caused strong reactions from other Evangelical churches in the country, and most would not consider it to be a 'true' Evangelical church. The debates range from theological issues to administrative and legal questions, including the way in which the IURD is involved in political parties and how the leadership of the Church intimidate people into voting for their candidates.

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<sup>63</sup> Wikipedia – ([pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Igreja\\_Universal\\_do\\_Reino\\_de\\_Deus](http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Igreja_Universal_do_Reino_de_Deus)), February 14, 2007

<sup>64</sup> Johnstone 2001:120; Ruuth, Anders, *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus* [The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God], 1995:172

As a mission movement, IURD established their first church outside Brazil three years after its foundation. The methods used abroad have followed the same pattern as in Brazil: the sending of a trained pastor strongly committed to the principles of the IURD, acquisition of a centrally located property or the rental of a known theatre, the provision of six to twelve months of financial support, with the expectation that the emerging congregation will assume economic responsibility, preaching directed towards marginalised people in urban areas, emphasis on healing and liberation prayer (exorcism), material prosperity and offerings.

IURD is thus a typical New-Pentecostal movement that has expanded its work to other nations, establishing branches that are exact copies of the original in Brazil. The missionary impetus is very strong, combining entrepreneurial strategies and a conviction of 'manifest destiny' as seen in other movements during mission history.

#### **4.5. Comparing the Case Studies**

These four cases of mission movements in Brazil show common characteristics as well as important differences. The denominational missions focus primarily on founding congregations according to their ecclesiastical system and linked to a central administration. The inter-denominational agencies have a greater flexibility and the character of churches originated will depend more on local circumstances and personnel involved. AMEM and Antioch missionaries could, theoretically, start any kind of Evangelical church based on the denominational origin of the missionaries. Nevertheless, the missions advocate that missionaries should be sensitive to the desires of the new congregation regarding the type of church they would like to be. In many

cases, the result is a local church with a blend of ecclesiastical and doctrinal traditions, not affiliated to any denomination.

The importance of a strong church base is emphasised particularly in the Baptist Convention and in the Antioch Mission, undoubtedly because both have a clear origin in church structures and were founded by church leaders. WEC International, and its Brazilian branch AMEM, was started from a more para-church perspective and the foreign WEC workers did not have the same allegiance to church structures as the Baptist missionaries. In the case of IURD, the founder had attended several churches before starting his own and the expansion has depended on a centralised strategy more similar to those in the business sector.

Charismatic leadership is highlighted in all four cases. In the Baptist Convention, the initial leaders, both foreign missionaries and nationals, had a decisive role in establishing the mission structure and developing a mission vision among church leaders. The changes with a new leadership in 1979 speeded up the investments and increased the number of projects and of missionaries. In the cases of the Antioch Mission and IURD, the charismatic leadership is even more evident with the founder being the main leader for many years and being responsible for much of decision making. The Antioch Mission has already gone through a leadership transition while the IURD is still led by the founder.

Finance is a major concern particularly in the case of the Antioch Mission and AMEM, which depend highly on voluntary donations to their central administration. Missionaries are usually supported directly by local churches even though support goes through the mission office. The Baptist Convention and the IURD have a stronger

financial position although their models are completely different. Baptist missions rely on monthly contributions from affiliated churches and the missionaries are paid from the central administration according to pre-established levels of salary. In the IURD the general leadership will sponsor new congregations for an initial period, expecting the local group to assume financial responsibility for the missionary after a few months and requesting a contribution towards the central administration.

The expansion strategy focuses in all four cases on less evangelised or ‘unreached’ groups within and outside the country. The main criterion for denominations is the existence of an affiliated church. For the Baptist Convention the partnership with other Baptist traditions has, in some cases, minimised the denominational focus. For the IURD it is important to plant the same matrix everywhere, with the condition that there will be a positive outcome. The Antioch Mission and AMEM have a more open policy, sending missionaries primarily to less evangelised regions but with more emphasis on the missionary’s own contacts and yearning. Opportunities for partnerships are an important consideration for the Antioch Mission when deciding about mission field and the presence of a WEC team could be decisive for the placement of AMEM missionaries.

Pre-field training is required by all four with the distinction that the denominational structures tend to include more education on theology and ecclesiastical tradition. The inter-denominational agencies, in this case AMEM and the Antioch Mission, have been precursors of cross-cultural training giving more emphasis on contextualisation and cross-cultural communication of the Gospel.

The holistic approach to mission is a distinctive of the majority of mission organisations in Brazil, with inter-denominational agencies working more on community development projects and denominational missions giving emphasis to institutions such as schools, orphanages and homes for elderly. This clearly derives from the fact that denominational structures usually have a more secure long-term financing for their projects, while mission agencies are more vulnerable financially and invest in specific short-term programmes. In the case of mission agencies such as those studied, social projects are often linked to a particular missionary. For denominational missions, such as the Baptist Convention, it is more a situation of co-operation with an established church in the receiving country.

## **5. Analysis of the Relation between Key Factors and the Emergence of Mission Movements**

Identifiable internal, external and international factors have been decisive for the emergence of Evangelical mission movements in Brazil from the 1970s onwards. Although the influence of some factors is more obvious than of others, the combination of these factors creates the fertile ground for the development of these organisations.

### **5.1. Internal Factors**

#### **5.1.1. The existence of growing Evangelical churches with the explicit objective of expanding to other locations and countries**

The growth of Evangelical churches in Brazil has already been highlighted several times in this chapter. From the beginning these churches were trained to be self-propagating

with the commitment to reach the nation with the Christian message. The evangelistic emphasis has been an important characteristic of the Brazilian Evangelical movements, reaching a climax in the 1960s and 1970s with mass campaigns and great revivals.

The main reason for starting a mission department within denominational structures was the practical need for a co-ordinating body that could administer the growing interest of local churches in sending church planters within the country and missionaries abroad. In the case of the Brazilian Baptist Convention, the mission department was created in the wake of the same general assembly in 1907 that established the denomination under national leadership, following the pattern of American Baptists.

However, not all historical churches had the same fervour for cross-cultural mission. Inter-denominational agencies emerged partly due to this a lack of mission focus in churches attended by the founders of these agencies. Thus, the Antioch Mission was founded by two Presbyterian pastors and seminary teachers who had no response from the denomination regarding their aspiration to engage churches in foreign mission.<sup>65</sup>

### **5.1.2. A theology of mission that includes the needed motivation for expansion**

Within the 'DNA' of the established churches in Brazil, there has been a strong biblical foundation for the expansion, often resulting in a dogmatic theological understanding of the mission of the church. Today most of the mission organisations would present a holistic approach to mission, including both the 'Great Commission' (e.g. Matthew 28:16-20), emphasising proclamation and bible teaching, and the 'Great Commandment' (e.g. John 20:21/Luke 4:18, 19), focusing on social action.

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<sup>65</sup> Personal interview with Jonathan dos Santos in July 1997



A blend of explicit and implicit motives has determined the emergence of sending structures. As in Western missions, the predominant explicit motive for engaging in mission has been 'love and compassion' for those who have not heard the Christian message and the desire to see them converted to Christianity. Implicit motives have also played an important role in the development of mission organisations, such as the sense of a messianic vocation (compared to 'manifest destiny' discussed in Chapter Two), the desire to be global and have extensions in other regions of the world, and the pressure of responding to expectations created around Evangelical churches in terms of mission engagement.

The biggest difficulty listed by pioneer leaders was not a weak mission theology but, alongside the normal hurdles for starting an organisation, the lack of confidence and experience in doing mission cross-culturally. Until the 1960s the expectation of Brazilian churches, both from national leadership and expatriate missionaries, was evangelisation of their own country. The churches were seen as poor and immature and not ready for global involvement. Nevertheless, a new paradigm emerged and foreign mission was included in the agenda of Evangelical churches. Inter-denominational agencies were born with that new outlook while denominational boards resisted until a new generation of leaders assumed key positions in the 1980s.

As in Western mission organisations, success has been part of a theology of mission and measured primarily in relation to the number of missionaries, converts and planted churches. In most reports from missionaries and publicity produced by the organisations, these aspects are mentioned. With increased involvement in social projects and community development, accomplishments have also been linked to

influence in society and achieved goals related to educational, medical and human rights projects.

Denominational mission boards tend to emphasise expansion in line with ecclesiastical tradition and the founding of local churches, theological schools and other institutions with the same doctrinal line. For many of these it is important to be able to report how many churches have been established in other nations, although the churches belong to national associations.

Inter-denominational agencies do not have the same pressure from their constituencies to establish their own churches and followers, but it is not unknown for them to start their own denomination in other countries in spite of being non-denominational in their home country. One example is Brazilian Bethel, which started as a non-denominational training and sending mission and has established its own fellowship of churches in Brazil and Portugal.

The emphasis on UPGs in recent years has resulted in a new parameter for measuring success, the number of UPGs reached by the mission. Strategy goals set up by mission organisations tend to include a specific number of UPGs that should be evangelised during a certain period. The evaluation of success or failure is, many times, directly linked to that goal.

Liberation Theology, with roots in Catholic theology of the time and in ecumenical circles, represented from the Protestant side by Alves and Míguez Bonino, strongly influenced missiological reflection among Evangelical theologians. The reflection of these continental ecumenical student movements was also seen among Evangelical

students in Brazil. Leaders of ABU, the Brazilian branch of IFES (International Fellowship of Evangelical Students) were influenced by this search for a new understanding of mission and for a different approach to the missionary task. Out of that reflection grew an important development in the leadership in Evangelical circles, shaping the autochthonous mission movements that emerged and linking their theology of mission to the holistic emphasis given by the Lausanne Covenant.

However, the influence of Liberation Theology and the ecumenical dialogue on Evangelical mission movements has been indirect, going through the filter of theological reflection by the Latin American Theological Fraternity (FTL) and Evangelical theologians involved in the consultations held by FTL. CLADE I,<sup>66</sup> the first continental conference had the theme 'Action in Christ for a continent in crisis' and recognised the alienation of Evangelicals regarding the social and political situation of the continent.<sup>67</sup> The work of FTL and the subsequent conferences have challenged Evangelical churches to be active in social transformation and not only to invest in evangelism and church planting. The continuous dialogue between COMIBAM and FTL and the participation of mission leaders in the missiological reflection provided by FTL has stimulated mission movements to holistic thinking and provided tools for analysing the strategies of mission outreach. The strong criticism of Latin American theologians against simplistic entrepreneurial mission, as already mentioned in Chapter Two, has also shaped mission theology among Brazilian mission movements and the association of mission organisations AMTB. Although many mission leaders still give priority to verbal proclamation in their mission strategy, the majority of missionaries are involved in holistic ministry.

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<sup>66</sup> CLADE stands for Congreso Latino-Americano de Evangelización [Latin American Conference on Evangelization] and there have been four so far: CLADE I in 1969, CLADE II in 1979, CLADE III in 1992 and CLADE IV in 2000

<sup>67</sup> Deiros 1992:815

### 5.1.3. Entrepreneurial leadership organising mission associations

A key issue for the success of mission organisations in Brazil has been leadership. In a country with a weak democratic tradition and male dominance in leadership positions, mission organisations have predominantly been led by men with centralised power, and sometimes an autocratic style of management. The traditional pattern for leadership in Latin America has been the colonel type (Spanish *caudillo* and Portuguese *coronel*). The dominating form of governance in Latin American countries, presidentialism, has also influenced the way organisations are led and it is only in more recent years that criticism of this form of power distance has been raised.<sup>68</sup> The democratisation process in most countries contributes to a different view on leadership issues and organisations of the Third Sector have been forced to change.

Arising from the student movements in the 1970s onwards, a new leadership pattern has been developed among Evangelicals. Based on the understanding that Brazilian churches have to take their responsibility for the expansion and growth within the country as well as participating in the evangelisation of the world, national leaders have started mission organisations and assumed leadership roles in existing ones. ABU, as already mentioned, together with other organisations such as OM and WEC, have been instrumental in the formation of younger leaders seeking for new methodologies rooted in a contextual theology of mission. This Brazilian entrepreneurial leadership has started new organisations, seeking new ways of doing mission.

The most common way of founding a mission organisation in Brazil has been at the initiative of a leader or a group of leaders creating an inter-denominational agency, such as the Antioch Mission, Kairos and Avante. A second option has been through the

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<sup>68</sup> As seen in the analysis referred to in Chapter Two, 'power distance' is a perceived weakness in management of Brazilian organisations, with a growing tendency towards 'team-oriented leadership'

direction of a denomination such as the Brazilian Baptist Convention (CBB) and the Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPB). The third way has been through the establishment of a Brazilian branch of an international mission such as WEC International and World Horizons. In all cases the presence of a strong leader has facilitated the emergence of the organisation and important improvements and growth have, for the most, been linked to an entrepreneurial leadership.

Depending on the type of mission organisation, leaders are appointed in various ways. Typically, the mission leader of a denominational structure is elected by the General Assembly or selected by the denominational board. In international missions, the appointment usually comes from the mother organisation, although local employees' views are taken into consideration. The first transition of leadership in autochthonous missions is often bound to the choice of the founder and frequently someone close to them (such as a family member) is appointed. Organisations that have developed an open membership with a democratic representation in a forum equivalent to a general assembly tend to introduce into leading positions new people from outside the earlier administrative core group.

#### **5.1.4. Available personnel and financial resources**

The recruitment of personnel for voluntary service is an important factor to the growth of any movement. Evangelical churches and mission organisations in Brazil have been successful in staffing their ministry structures with volunteers both for administrative work as well as for outreach activities. The growth of cross-cultural missionaries, as seen in the presented statistics, shows the tendency towards an even stronger involvement of people in different mission movements, particularly in "faith missions" where voluntarism and personal commitment are key elements within the association.

Financial resources are, for the most, intrinsically related to the availability of personnel. Candidates' acceptance by the organisations is dependent on the financial backup that the future missionaries have. In some cases, the mission provides financial support through general funds or resources designated to the specific projects in which the missionary will serve. In other cases, partnerships with international mission organisations provide the needed backing for a missionary. In a few cases, a more business-like solution is employed and, as in the IURD, the person is supported on the mission field through an investment with the clear intention of ultimate self-support and repayment to the mother organisation.

In general, Brazilian mission movements have been rich in personnel although finances have many times been an issue of concern, particularly in inter-denominational structures with a loose relationship to local churches. However, in the initial stage of the development of any mission movements the presence of volunteers with a sacrificial attitude and willingness to dedicate their own resources to the cause, have characterised the Brazilian mission, both denominational and inter-denominational.

## **5.2. External Factors**

### **5.2.1. A society with liberty to establish voluntary associations based on existing models of voluntarism**

As already seen in the second part of this chapter, voluntary associations have been part of Brazilian history since the arrival of Catholic orders. In the last two decades the liberty to establish associations has led to an overwhelming number of organisations within civil society, focusing on a broad spectrum of interests and activities. The only

limiting factor is finances, leading to the vast number of associations that have to close their activity after a few years of existence.

The life-cycle of mission organisations in Brazil follows international patterns relevant to voluntary associations in general and mission agencies in particular. As previously stated, the driving force in the initial stage is usually a creative and dynamic person who builds the foundations of a mission department or agency. The first years are characterised by a 'movement' phase, usually seen by quantitative growth. After some years, the tendency is towards institutionalisation resulting in bureaucratic organisations acting in accordance with established rules and by-laws and with limited space for charismatic leadership. Qualitative growth is generally preferable to quantitative development and stagnation occurs. In the Brazilian case, younger leaders emerging in mission organisations that are in this third phase tend to leave and form their own sending structures.

### **5.2.2. Growing economy in society and resources available for mission initiatives**

Brazil is today one of the largest economies in the world and has seen a significant development particularly in industrial areas of the country. Churches have been founded in all social groups in society and where the per capita income is not so high, the number of converts compensate for poverty, giving the churches enough resources to expand their work. In urban areas the middle class is an important source of church finance and the main supporter of the mission enterprise.

The origin of mission organisations is also reflected in the resources available in the first stage of development. By and large, denominational missions have had more resources to hand, are usually supported by a greater number of churches and rely on the

stability provided by the denominational structure. The growth in the number of missionaries has been slower than in inter-denominational agencies, owing to more bureaucratic processes and more careful undertaking of responsibility. On the other hand, the development has normally been more stable with a realistic mission budget.

Inter-denominational agencies have, in general, started and developed their structures based on the so-called 'faith principle'. The history of the Antioch Mission illustrates that reality well. Without support from a denomination or group of churches, financial dependency has been laid on committed individuals, the founders' personal resources and "on God's provision", as Santos expresses it.<sup>69</sup> Every year the budget is set based both on concrete promises from churches that support missionaries through the organisation and on estimated income that could come from voluntary contributions by individuals or other organisations. Inter-denominational agencies have increasingly searched for new forms of income generation such as publishing and selling books and mission-related materials and small businesses. Donations from churches and individuals are, however, the main sources of funding for maintenance. For buildings and social projects, proposals are sent to foundations within and outside the country and a significant part of the work is done by volunteers. Following a model of voluntary associations, seen particularly among non-profit NGOs, the strength of this kind of missions is the personal commitment of its associates and staff.

Inter-denominational missions, established originally as national branches of international organisations (for example AMEM and OM) have had, in many ways, the same initial challenges in financing their activities. However, their links to sources in Europe and North America have facilitated investment and support for offices and staff.

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<sup>69</sup> Personal interview with Jonatan dos Santos in July 1997



The principle adopted by the majority of Brazilian missions has been that missionaries should be entirely maintained by Brazilian resources while central administration, buildings, training centres, community development and other social projects could find additional financing abroad.

The increasing competition between mission agencies has forced both denominational and inter-denominational organisations to be more pro-active in self-promotion. This is seen in the growing number of websites and printed materials, participation in events both nationally and internationally, employment of professionals in the area of marketing and investment in media communication.

A complicating factor for Brazilian missions has been the difficulty in sending funds to other countries through the official bank system. In order not to use illegal procedures, mission organisations had, for many years, ‘bridges’ in other countries channelling support to their missionaries. Agreements were made so that funds were transferred to foreign organisations working in Brazil and equivalent amounts were sent directly from the headquarters of these organisations to Brazilian mission projects and personnel abroad. In more recent years, the laws have changed permitting the international transfer of limited amounts of funds.

Co-operation with related denominations in other countries or with other mission organisations focusing on the same target area, has been an important element in Brazilian missions establishing new mission fields. Usually the administrative and project costs are divided and each mission stands for the support of their own missionaries.

### **5.2.3. Social, political and ecclesiastical factors**

The Brazilian constitution gives full freedom to establish churches and other associations of religious character. The immigration policies regarding work permits in the country have restricted the entrance of foreign missionaries, allowing permanent visas only when national organisations back the invitation to them. Among indigenous tribes, the Indigenous Department of the Brazilian government, FUNAI, has almost completely prohibited the work of expatriates, with few exceptions. In some indigenous areas the entrance of non-natives is not allowed unless the tribal chief requests the presence of someone from outside the tribe. One example is the Bananal Island, in the Xingu River, where several indigenous groups live isolated from the rest of the population. These restrictions have forced mission organisations to change of strategy, using national missionaries for their indigenous cross-cultural work and replacing expatriates in the leadership.

The nationalistic phase in the 1930s to 1950s also created an opportunity for a nationalisation process in most denominations and mission organisations working in the country. However, the racial mix of people that form the Brazilian population has minimised the tensions between nationals and foreigners and led to a relatively generous policy towards immigrants by the government.

## **5.3. International Factors**

### **5.3.1. International exposure and contacts**

The historic review of the development of mission movements in Brazil has demonstrated the importance of international contacts for their appearance. Conferences convened by the Lausanne Movement, the World Evangelical Alliance, the Billy

Graham Association and the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement, are often mentioned by mission leaders as being vital for their engagement in cross-cultural mission. In Latin America, it has been particularly consultations and gatherings promoted by COMIBAM and the Latin American Theological Fraternity that have been influential. Global trends in mission activity, exemplified and represented by these conferences and umbrella organisations, have placed strong pressure on national missions, with the expectation of an increasing participation of Brazilian movements on the international scene.

The presence of international mission organisations in the country is also an example of the global networks. Using a short-term strategy, these missions have recruited younger people who, after an initial experience of mission, often feel called to long-term involvement. The teaching on mission by expatriate missionaries has contributed towards forming a generation of church leaders concerned about world evangelisation and missionary work in other cultures. The information that focuses on global outreach and on strategies for reaching out with the gospel has also contributed to mission awareness and the mobilisation of candidates for missionary ministry.

### **5.3.2. Diasporic groups**

Diasporic groups leaving Brazil for work and study in other countries have also been a significant bridge-head for mission initiatives. In most cases the move has not been motivated by the desire to share religious beliefs but to search for economic stability and new opportunities for personal career development. However, the broad-minded and extrovert personality of Brazilians has created occasions for imparting the Christian message and starting a local church community. In some cases, these ethnic churches go beyond the language and cultural barriers, also reaching out to other nationalities and to

local people. As a strategy for cross-cultural mission and for financing mission initiatives, the Brazilian diaspora has not been as important as the Ghanaian and Indian.

### **5.3.3. National associations and international co-operation**

The Brazilian Association of Cross-Cultural Mission (AMTB) has played an important role in connecting Brazilian missions with other countries and continents. The work done by the AMTB has been vital, creating codes of good practice for mission movements as well as for international co-operation. Contacts between AMTB and its peer organisations abroad have both given mission organisations in Brazil a better understanding of the realities in other cultural and religious contexts and facilitated the establishment of co-operative efforts. This has minimised potentially negative collateral effects of cultural confrontation and maximised efficiency in the use of both financial and human resources.

Another important aspect of international co-operation has been the global interchange, resulting in new forms of sending people to other countries, particularly during the last two decades. Sports, building companies, multinational concerns, cultural interchange, etc., are new ways for people to stay shorter or longer periods in different countries. These new sending models guarantee payment for part of the costs involved in moving people from one country to another and, in many cases, also for the daily living of this new category of missionary.

## CONCLUSION

The key factors are clearly seen in the emergence and growth of mission movements in Brazil and have resulted in one of the more successful and prosperous NSCs for cross-cultural mission. It is important, however, to recognise that not all the factors have had the same impact and weight on the developments of Brazilian missions and that it is sometimes difficult to determine the level of influence that each factor has had in particular cases. Nonetheless, the general trends are quite patent and these can be summarised as follows.

Following the growth of the churches, Evangelical mission movements emerged in great number in the 1970s and 1980s. Mission movements in Brazil, as in other countries, can be divided in three main categories based on their origin: 1) Denominational mission boards; 2) Inter-denominational agencies founded by Brazilians; and 3) National branches of International agencies, some with national leadership. Following trends in other regions, a growing number of local churches have formed their own sending structure, resulting, ultimately, in new denominations.

There is a sense of missionary vocation deeply rooted in Brazilian pietism and religious activity (a legacy from both Catholic and Protestant missions) compared to the 'Manifest Destiny' seen in the West. In recent years this missionary vocation has been reinforced by the effects of globalisation and influenced by international conferences and organisations, encouraging participation of national churches in global evangelisation. A holistic theology of mission has developed, coming from a variety of sources, including Liberation Theology, the reflection done by the Latin American

Theological Fraternity, the national student movement and the influence from international movements such as the Lausanne Movement.

Common to all the mission initiatives is the presence of entrepreneurial leadership. The arrival of international and inter-denominational agencies to Latin America, representing a new wave of translation of mission models, was soon assimilated by national leaders. Contextualised variations of these newer types of mission structures have increasingly appeared on the national scene.

The democratisation process after the military regime gave new space for the establishment of voluntary associations and facilitated participation of Evangelical churches internationally in propagating the Christian faith. In the same way, the growing Brazilian economy offered new opportunities for the churches to organise themselves in mission departments and to meet the costs of sending people to other parts of the world. Religious freedom has been of vital importance to the rise of the number of mission associations. Visa restrictions and the need to replace expatriates with a national labour force have also encouraged autochthonous structure models and encouraged churches to mobilise candidates.

International trends and other globalising factors continue to have strong influence on mission movements in Brazil. The choice of target areas and methodology for evangelisation is aligned with those commonly accepted and promoted by global networks and international conferences.

In interviews with mission leaders, it is noticeable that few external factors were mentioned regarding the development and success of sending structures.<sup>70</sup> Political, social and economic factors in society affecting churches and their affiliates are not taken into consideration when the expansion of missionary work is discussed. However, during the 1940s, Brazil went through an important period of nationalism and it was natural that Christian churches focused more on their own neighbourhood than on other countries. With the globalisation process increasing speed in the 1970s and 1980s, the isolation was no longer possible and the Brazilian government as well as the Second and Third Sector started looking for contacts and opportunities in other regions of the world.

The factors for the emergence of mission movements and the characteristics of these movements in Brazil are compared with other countries in Chapter Seven. Attention will now be turned to mission movements in Ghana, representing mission initiatives from Africa.

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<sup>70</sup> The same occurs in the official websites of mission organisations when describing their history

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **EVANGELICAL MISSION MOVEMENTS IN GHANA**

This chapter focuses on Evangelical mission movements in Ghana. It follows the same outline as the earlier chapter on Brazil, identifying the presence of the key internal, external and international factors that have determined the emergence and development of Ghana's mission organisations.

The chapter is divided into five parts. The first part is dedicated to the history of Christian missions to Ghana, giving a background to the translation and contextualisation of Christianity in the country and the context in which mission movements emerged. The second part outlines the political and social developments in civil society and the appearance of voluntary associations. The third part describes the evolution of mission movements over the last forty years, and the fourth section considers four case studies employing different mission models. The fifth part analyses the movements based on the premise that the key factors identified are relevant for Ghana and ends with some general conclusions.

#### **1. History of Christian Missions to Ghana**

The first Europeans to arrive at the so-called Gold Coast were the Portuguese in 1471 and a fort was established at Elmina in 1482. It was mainly trade that attracted



Europeans,<sup>1</sup> and the expansion of Portuguese domains also led to the introduction of the Catholic faith.<sup>2</sup> The Portuguese came to a land divided between different ethnic groups. The ancestors of the today Akan-speaking people had entered the forest region of central Ghana in the thirteenth century.<sup>3</sup> In the same period, the Ga-speaking people of the coastal plains and the Ewe of the Volta region entered the land coming from the east. In the fifteenth century, several of these groups began organising themselves into states, developing trade with Islamic states of the north and later also with Europeans.

The Ashanti people, members of the Twi-speaking branch of the Akan, migrated to the upland region near the Lake Bosumtwi in the seventeenth century. At the end of that century, “the Akan state of Akwamu created an empire that, stretching from the central Gold Coast eastward to Dahomey, sought to control the trade roads to the coast of the whole eastern Gold Coast”.<sup>4</sup> The Akwamu empire was short-lived but stimulated a union of the Ashanti states. The Ashanti expanded their territories and became one of the major kingdoms, reaching the coast in the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

Other European nations became equally interested in establishing commercial links with Africa which resulted in a fierce competition with the Portuguese.<sup>6</sup> In 1593 the Dutch arrived and in 1618 the English Company of Adventurers of London Trading in Africa built a fort in Gambia. In 1637 the Elmina fort was surrendered by the Dutch and English merchants soon took up routes for slave trade from West Africa to the

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<sup>1</sup> Debrunner, Hans W., *A History of Christianity in Ghana*, 1967:16; ‘Ghana’ in *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 20, 1988:870

<sup>2</sup> Sundkler, Bengt and Christopher Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa*, 2000: 46; Hastings, Adrian, *The Church in Africa 1450-1950*, 1996:71

<sup>3</sup> Fage, John, ‘History of Ghana’ in *Britannica Online Encyclopedia* – [www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/232376/Ghana/214121/History](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/232376/Ghana/214121/History), 2011:3

<sup>4</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica* 1988:870

<sup>5</sup> Owusu-Ansah, David, ‘The History of Ghana’, extract from the *Historical Dictionary of Ghana* on the *Online Encyclopedia* 2001: 1 – [www.encyclopedia.msm.com](http://www.encyclopedia.msm.com)

<sup>6</sup> Agbeti, J. Kofi, *West African Church History: Christian Missions and Church Foundations: 1482-1919*, Vol. 1, 1986:5

Americas. During the period 1751 to 1824, the Society for Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) sent out clergymen to serve as chaplains to the forts.

Two centuries later, neither Catholic nor Protestant efforts in missionary activity had produced major results. The combining of Christianity and commerce had once again failed to translate the Christian faith in a way that was attractive and relevant to local people, as seen in other countries and continents. Lack of contextualisation and ambiguity in missionary motivation had resulted in rejection by the majority of the natives.<sup>7</sup>

### 1.1. Protestant Mission Strategy in the Nineteenth Century

The so-called modern Christian missionary movement came to Ghana in the 1820s in a combination of mission and trading interests.<sup>8</sup> In 1828 four Basel Missionaries arrived to Gold Coast. Three of the four soon died and the only survivor, Andreas Riis “was saved by the ministrations of an African herbalist”.<sup>9</sup> In 1835, Andreas Riis moved into the region of Akwapim. His efforts to adapt to Ghanaian culture are seen by Pobee as an important attempt to contextualise Christianity to an African mindset.<sup>10</sup> Through Riis, West Indian Moravian churches were contacted and a group of ex-slaves from Jamaica came, giving a new impulse to the evangelisation of Ghana.<sup>11</sup> The fact that they came back to Africa “proved that Christianity was not only the affair of heroic white individuals but a corporate venture for Africans as well - a black man’s religion”.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Clarke, Peter B., *West Africa and Christianity*, 1986:25

<sup>8</sup> Falk, Peter, *The Growth of the Church in Africa*, 1979:118

<sup>9</sup> Isichei, Elizabeth, *A History of Christianity in Africa*, 1995:167

<sup>10</sup> Pobee, John and Gabriel Ositely II, *African Initiatives in Christianity*, 1998:10

<sup>11</sup> Antwi, Daniel, ‘The African Factor in Christian Mission to Africa: A Study of Moravian and Basel Mission Initiatives to Ghana’, *International Review of Mission*, 87/344, 1998:64-65

<sup>12</sup> Debrunner 1967:107

Andrew Walls confirms the importance of these missionaries with African descent. He says about the free blacks and Africans in Sierra Leone that

There is something symbolic in the fact that the first church in tropical Africa in modern times was not a missionary creation at all. It arrived ready made, a body of people of African birth or descent who had come to faith in Christ as plantation slaves or as soldiers in the British army during the American War of Independence...<sup>13</sup>

The Ashanti signed a peace treaty with Britain in 1831 and the subsequent peace coincided with a period of increased European Christian missionary work in the region.<sup>14</sup> The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMS) came in 1835<sup>15</sup> and the Bremen Mission (North German Missionary Society) came to the Ewe people, east of the Volta, in 1847. Schools were started to train indigenous pastors and national leaders translated the New Testament into the Ewe language. Bremen mission adopted a positive approach to African society and culture, not condemning and eradicating African customs, traditions and rituals, or withdrawing converts from their context.<sup>16</sup> Hastings affirms that “the Basel and Bremen missionaries were excellent linguists and more adaptive than the British. Johann Christaller in particular provided a series of outstanding translations in Twi in the 1850s and 1860s.”<sup>17</sup> Local elders, trained by missionaries, led the church, although a self-governing church only happened when the Germans had to leave during the First World War. In spite of all these efforts to make Christianity as acceptable as possible, Meyer says that it was mainly material advantages that attracted people:

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<sup>13</sup> Walls, Andrew, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, 2000:86

<sup>14</sup> Owusu-Ansah 2001:3

<sup>15</sup> Sanneh, Lamin, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact*, 1983:119

<sup>16</sup> Clarke 1986:60

<sup>17</sup> Hastings, Adrian, *The Church in Africa: 1450-1950*, 1994:341

At the beginning, only a few Ewe were inclined to convert. With the establishment of colonial rule and the political and economic ramifications it entailed, however, more and more people were attracted to the new way of life. It was evident that Christians were the group able to profit most of colonial society.<sup>18</sup>

All three missionary societies present in Ghana in the first half of the nineteenth century (Basel, Bremen and the Methodists) established training institutions at early dates.<sup>19</sup> The main purpose of schools was to enable congregations to read the Bible and to use the hymnbook. At the same time, it was important to train national leaders, teachers and ministers. There was also an attempt to understand and analyse the African mind, history, customs and religion; this made the schools even more important.<sup>20</sup>

## 1.2. British Colony and Emergence of National Churches

In July 1874 the British proclaimed the coastal territories as the Gold Coast Colony and moved their administrative centre from Cape Coast to Accra. In 1896 Britain attacked and occupied Ashanti, declaring it a British protectorate and in 1899 British forces occupied the Northern Territories, the high plains region north of Ashanti. A final Ashanti rebellion against the British occurred in 1900. The rebellion was put down in 1901, and Ashanti was proclaimed a British colony. In 1902 Ashanti and the Northern Territories were annexed to the Gold Coast Colony.<sup>21</sup> The state of Ghana was, subsequently, formed from the combination of these three regions, The Gold Coast,

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<sup>18</sup> Meyer, Birgit, *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana*, 1999:11-13

<sup>19</sup> Clarke 1986:58

<sup>20</sup> Debrunner 1967:144-145

<sup>21</sup> Owusu-Ansah 2001: 3; Gifford 1998:57

Ashanti and the Northern Territories; and in 1919 the British Trust Territory of Togoland was also incorporated.<sup>22</sup>

The period from 1890 to 1960 is characterised by the growth of Christian mission and the emergence of national church initiatives.<sup>23</sup> The occupation of Kumasi by the British facilitated the establishment of churches in the Ashanti territory, although suspicion and hostility towards Europeans generated by the Anglo-Ashanti wars hindered greater growth in the area.<sup>24</sup> A notable characteristic of Anglican work in Kumasi was the link between the Church and Ashanti royalty with the baptism of Asantehene Prempeh II.<sup>25</sup>

The Bremen Mission saw important progress in agricultural, educational, medical, and technical work. Much effort was made to establish Christian homes and to relate them to the Christian community. Polygamists were accepted into the fellowship of the churches and instructed in biblical teachings. The aim to establish an indigenous church was expressed in the founding of a seminary to train pastors for local churches.<sup>26</sup>

According to Debrunner, two events during the First World War were decisive in the history of Christianity in Ghana: the activity of the Liberian Evangelist and Prophet William Wade Harris and the deportation of the Basel and Bremen missionaries. These

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<sup>22</sup> During the First World War France and Britain occupied the German colony, and in 1922 it was formally divided between them under a League of Nations mandate. Two-thirds of the land and people, including Lomé, became French Togoland, bordering Dahomey. The remainder in the west, bordering the Gold Coast, became British Togoland. In 1946 the two Togolands became United Nations trust territories. The British part was administered with the Gold Coast and became part of independent Ghana in 1957, but French Togoland remained administratively distinct from Dahomey (now Benin) and became independent as the Republic of Togo in 1960 ([www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/598113/Togoland](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/598113/Togoland))

<sup>23</sup> Sundkler comments on the period 1920 to 1959, affirming that "Christianity and cocoa underpinned the material and spiritual advance of the Ghanaian people during this period". Sundkler 2000:714

<sup>24</sup> Clarke 1986:97; Falk 1979:328

<sup>25</sup> Sundkler 2000:725,726

<sup>26</sup> Falk 1979:329-330

unplanned events provided a stimulus towards the independence, both inward and outward, of Ghanaian Christianity.<sup>27</sup>

The Pentecostal movement came to southern Ghana through the Assemblies of God in 1931 and the Apostolic Church arrived six years later. In the 1950s these movements established mission stations in the north, when the colonial power gave greater freedom for missionary work in that part of the country.<sup>28</sup>

### **1.3. Ghanaian Independence and African Independent Churches**

In 1957, the country became an independent state and took the name Ghana, being the first sub-Saharan colonial country to reach independence. In 1960, when Ghana became a republic, Kwame Nkrumah was elected president. Nkrumah had been educated at a Catholic school in western Ghana but described himself as a 'non-denominational Christian'.<sup>29</sup> Political developments had once again a clear influence on the religious scene in the country. Most Christian churches expanded significantly after Ghana's independence and the growth was especially strong among the Roman Catholic Church and the African Independent churches (AICs).<sup>30</sup>

AICs, or so-called 'spiritual' churches, emerged mainly through national leadership. Some of them were formed out of a reaction to translated models of the Gospel and the 'imperialistic' behaviour of traditional churches. Others came to existence through a

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<sup>27</sup> Debrunner 1967:269. The Basel Mission, known from 1926 as the Presbyterian Church of Gold Coast, was fully independent in 1950. Clarke 1986:97; Sundkler 2000:718

<sup>28</sup> Sundkler 2000:726

<sup>29</sup> Sundkler 2000:943-944

<sup>30</sup> Clarke 1986:198. AICs can represent 'African Independent Churches', 'African Initiated Churches', African Instituted Churches and 'African Indigenous Churches'. The Independent churches emerged mainly in the late nineteenth century, breaking away from foreign missions, while the Initiated churches came later through direct African initiative

desire of finding 'African ways' of worship.<sup>31</sup> The economic depression in the 1930s and 1940s, owing to the crisis in cocoa production and export, resulted in a difficult time for the country and the search for answers and solutions to social deprivation brought a proliferation of new *abosom* shrines.

The emergence of AICs shows the entrepreneurial initiative of Ghanaian leaders, many of them trained and formed in mission schools and institutions. The freedom to establish these new churches, in spite of the resistance from the heads of the historical churches, provides evidence of the openness in Ghanaian society to new forms of voluntary associations, linking models learned from missionaries to Ghanaian traditions. Not only had the Christian faith been assimilated by nationals but many had gone a step further and contextualised Christian expressions to local culture and tradition.

In many traditional churches, founded through missions from Europe and North America, the cultural aspects were not taken seriously. The emergence of the AICs shows this search for African identity, stimulated by nationalism.<sup>32</sup> However the AICs were indigenous also for another important reason: the endeavour to address the hopes and fears of the Africans and therefore their preoccupation with witchcraft and exorcism.<sup>33</sup> These churches have not grown significantly over the last two decades because of their strong traditional conservatism, often being very rigid in their maintenance of for example liturgy and clothing. Today, most younger people prefer Charismatic churches where they feel connected to the wider world since they are more international.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Clarke 1986:157

<sup>32</sup> Anim, Emmanuel, personal interview, November 2001

<sup>33</sup> Pobee 1998:26-27

<sup>34</sup> Anim, November 2001

Meyer, in her analysis of the Presbyterian Church among the Ewe people (EPC), affirms that one of the reasons for conflict between missionaries and nationals was the paternalistic treatment of younger national leaders.<sup>35</sup> The main problem, however, was the question of combining Christian faith and African culture.<sup>36</sup>

The matter is how to define true 'Africanisation', and 'unwanted syncretism'. Using the example of the division within the EPC, Meyer believes that Pentecostalism (including the AICs) was a way back to traditional African beliefs, attracting people and leading them to new understanding of the Christian message.<sup>37</sup> Bediako agrees that the emergence of AICs was a result of a felt need for contextualised ways to express the Christian faith.<sup>38</sup> They were important in creating an African self-consciousness and indicated the direction that many of the Christian churches have later followed. The problem, according to Bediako, was that nineteenth century mission did not see in African traditional religion and culture a partner for dialogue in the same way as with Buddhism and philosophical Hinduism in Asia.<sup>39</sup>

The critical question is how Christian theology could be relevant to African people and their reality. Bediako believes that a theology of inculturation is the answer, giving Christian faith a national 'clothing' that better expresses the biblical principles in their own context.<sup>40</sup> The result is the emergence of an 'African Selfhood' – the indigenisation of the Church seeking for a bridge between biblical revelation and the pre-Christian and pre-missionary religious tradition – to develop their own theology, churchmanship,

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<sup>35</sup> Meyer 1999:11

<sup>36</sup> Meyer 1999:134

<sup>37</sup> Meyer 1999:212

<sup>38</sup> Bediako, Kwame, *Jesus in Africa: The Christian Gospel in African History and Experience*, 2000:21

<sup>39</sup> Bediako 1995:69; Agbeti, J. Kofi, *West African Church History: Christian Missions and Theological Training 1842-1970*, 1991:205-206

<sup>40</sup> Bediako 1995:177



liturgy and discipline.<sup>41</sup> One example is the theology of Mensa Otabil and his instillation of black pride based on the affirmation of God's purpose with the black race.<sup>42</sup>

The sensitive question of contextualisation is evident and exemplified in the tension between AICs and the historical churches founded by Western missions. Contextualisation of mission models is one of the central themes in the emergence of mission movements, particularly those founded outside the domain of the mainline churches. The African theology of mission has also developed based on the dialogue and tension between concepts translated by foreign missions and the autochthonous hermeneutics of the Christian faith. Most Ghanaian missiologists would today incorporate in their theology a Christian response to traditional religious beliefs.

#### **1.4. New Pentecostalism and Charismatic Movements**

Another example of the freedom to establish religious and voluntary organisations is the appearance of the so-called Neo-Pentecostalism and Charismatic movements from the 1970s onwards. Larbi has divided them into four types:

- Charismatic movements within mainline churches;
- Para-church movements, working mainly with young people and students;
- Neo-Pentecostal movements focusing on social needs;<sup>43</sup> and,
- Prophet/Healer-centred Pentecostalist Prayer Camps.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Bediako 2000:54

<sup>42</sup> Gifford, Paul, *African Christianity – Its Public Role*, 1998:82-83

<sup>43</sup> Larbi, E. Kingsley, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 2001:307-315

<sup>44</sup> Larbi 2001:369

Interestingly, many of these new movements have added to their names terms such as 'global', 'international' and 'world', demonstrating a desire to be seen as global movements and searching for a stronger identity. In some cases, however, the church is limited to a local congregation, sometimes called the 'world centre' of the organisation. On the other hand, some of these movements, as well as other Evangelical churches, have an international linkage and are a result of one of the elements of globalisation, the exposure to ideas from other parts of the world.<sup>45</sup>

### 1.5. Summary

The history of Western mission movements coming to Ghana demonstrates both positive and negative aspects of the process of translation of the Christian message and the contextualisation that has occurred among nationals. Certainly the contribution to the development of the country was significant, particularly in the areas of education, commerce and democratic values. From a Christian perspective, the introduction of Christian faith should also be seen as very important. However, there is no doubt that economic and political interests were the main motivation for Europeans in financing and facilitating missionary enterprise. The credibility of mission work was jeopardised when important aspects of the culture were not taken into account. Imposition of faith, constant conflicts, cruel wars and the slave trade, are examples from Ghanaian history that embarrass the missionary effort and cause deep concern regarding how the Christian faith should be spread, particularly among Evangelical missiologists today.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> See detailed discussion on the 'internationalising' of Pentecostal movements in Ghana in Anim, Emmanuel, "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" An Analysis of Prosperity Teaching in the Charismatic Ministries (Churches) in Ghana and its Wider Impact', PhD Thesis, Open University, Milton Keynes 2003:282-287

<sup>46</sup> Examples are given in Chapter Two, Section 4

The exclusion of the 'middle reality' (described by Hiebert as the 'excluded middle'), the sphere between the material and the spiritual, was a theological mistake that hindered the missionaries from dealing with issues related to the animistic world of spirits and ancestors.<sup>47</sup> Seen as pure superstition, the fears and the profound respect for the mystic aspects of nature and life were not considered and Christian doctrines were undermined through a strong syncretistic solution, as seen in the AICs. The churches, whether Catholic or Protestant, that had the ability to find contextual models of worship, leadership, ecclesiastical structure and biblical answers to these spiritual realities were those that generally grew in acceptance by the Ghanaian people. One example is the Church of Pentecost, and many of the Evangelical churches in Ghana today follow their example.

Ghana is also an example of a complex situation with a great variety of ethnic groups, division of territories according to different tribes and an enormous diversity in cultural backgrounds, contributing to a fragmentation of Christian churches. This fragmentation was reinforced by the lack of collaboration between mission organisations. The emerging AICs were therefore a natural and logical consequence of the way in which foreign missions worked. In many ways, AICs saved the Christian faith in Ghana, especially during the time of nationalism and striving for independence. It seems, though, that they have lost contact with contemporary reality and younger members are leaving for new Charismatic movements.

The growth of Christian churches in Ghana is a result of a series of factors, among which are:

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<sup>47</sup> See explanation on the 'excluded middle' in Hiebert, Paul, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 1994:196-198

- The ability of some churches and leaders to adjust and contextualise the message and ecclesiastical forms to the receiving culture;
- The establishment of schools for education of children and teenagers, as well as for theological training;
- The process of nationalising leadership and denominational structures;
- The emergence of national initiatives as a revolt against foreign missions or as a result of a desire to form culturally relevant churches; and,
- The growth of Charismatic movements in the last decades, showing the importance of globalisation and attracting young educated people to more internationalised congregations.

The elements highlighted in the historical review are clearly related to the internal, external and international factors leading to the emergence of mission movements in a particular national context. The translated concepts of mission have been partially assimilated by national churches and contextualised forms have given structure to self-missionising initiatives. New models are forged out of the conflict with foreign organisational patterns by upcoming leaders, who have often been trained in critical thinking in schools supported by colonial powers. Although mission leaders in Ghana today take for granted the freedom to establish voluntary mission associations and do not realise the political and sociological factors behind that opportunity, history shows how the present situation owes much to gradual changes in attitude and competition for space by national leadership, particularly in the last century. These factors lead us to consider the voluntary associations in Ghana.

## 2. Voluntary Associations in Ghanaian Society

The freedom to establish voluntary associations is well documented in the history of Ghana, with periods of both encouragement by governments and restrictions. Mission organisations were eager to found schools, hospitals, agriculture projects and trading companies from the beginning of their activities in the country.<sup>48</sup>

Relatively early, Africans were part of the political system owing their education to mission schools and being part of the elite that this created. Gifford notes that “already in the 1870s there were Africans in the Legislative Council, and in the late nineteenth century Ghanaians with considerable Western education were becoming increasingly prominent”.<sup>49</sup> Members of this elite formed voluntary organisations for their particular interests. One example was the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society.<sup>50</sup>

Modern nationalistic parties began to emerge in the 1940s. In 1947, the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) was formed by Ghanaian nationalists and Kwame Nkrumah was appointed general secretary. The Convention People’s Party (CPP) resulted from a split within UGCC led by Nkrumah, later becoming the leading party in the independence process.

Surprisingly, perhaps, the freedom continued after independence. Nkrumah had been educated in a Christian environment and sealed an agreement of co-operation with churches from the beginning of his mandate as Prime Minister and later as President. Nkrumah’s ideology was that the state should be secular, although he still gave freedom

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<sup>48</sup> Walls, Andrew F., ‘Africa in Christian History – Retrospect and Prospect’, *Journal of African Christian Thought* 1998:9

<sup>49</sup> Gifford 1998:57

<sup>50</sup> Gifford 1998:57

to all kind of religious expressions. Pobee affirms that Nkrumah's socialism was "a cliché rather than a conviction".<sup>51</sup>

One of the functions of Nkrumah's secular state was to take control of education. Until 1951 foreign missions had been the major educational agency and their opposition to attempts to nationalise schools forced the government to back down, allowing churches to continue with their educational programmes.<sup>52</sup>

There was growing discontent with Nkrumah's less democratic ruling methods, including the one-party system, and the fact that he became increasingly authoritarian. Although the 'democratic model' of Ghana, as the first independent state in colonial Africa, incorporated laws giving freedom for churches and other associations to be established, political developments lacked democratic foundations such as a stable multi-party system. Although the short-lived Second and Third Republics allowed for multi-party politics, changes were made in the so-called Fourth Republic, when a new constitution was adopted, allowing a multi-party system. Private initiatives had not been encouraged and the centralisation of power and resources had led the country to bankruptcy. People had no access to essential services such as healthcare, education and potable water, particularly in rural areas.

Owing to the collapse of the economy, Ghana submitted to the conditions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). During the 1980s several programmes to assist the recovery of the country resulted in a slightly better economy

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<sup>51</sup> Pobee 1988: 45

<sup>52</sup> Pobee 1991: 64

but also created a strong dependence on external funds.<sup>53</sup> The international pressure, particularly from the IMF, forced modifications on Rawlings' government, but it was not a full transition to democracy.<sup>54</sup>

Divine Kumah, a Christian journalist in Accra, denounced the bias of the government in spite of the 1992 Constitution, affirming that "the 1992 Constitution says we are a secular state, but the NDC government is still pursuing an agenda that is clearly anti-Christian and pro-idol worship".<sup>55</sup> Protest marches against Rawlings took place in major cities in 1995, exposing the dissatisfaction with the government. The opposition was much more organised during the elections in 1996, but Rawlings was re-elected to the presidency for a new period. The general consensus was that this time the elections were 'free and fair', in spite of the fact that the sitting president had used all available means to promote his candidature. The elections 2000 and 2004, when Kufuor was elected and re-elected, have been considered fully democratic.

The Roman Catholic Church has frequently protested against the arbitrariness of the government.<sup>56</sup> Catholic Relief Services (CRS), an international voluntary association started by US Catholics, was one of the major players during the crisis in the 1980s. Covering areas that the government could not respond to, voluntary groups within the Roman Catholic Church have made an important contribution, promoting social justice and human rights in the country.

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<sup>53</sup> Omenyo, Cephas N., 'A Comparative Analysis of the Development Intervention of Protestant and Charismatic/Pentecostal Organisations in Ghana', *Svensk MissionsTidskrift – SMT*, 2006:10,11

<sup>54</sup> Gifford 1998:60

<sup>55</sup> Kumah, Divine P., *Is Ghana under a Curse?* 2000:22; NDC stands for National Democratic Congress

<sup>56</sup> Gifford 1998:64

Protestant churches have also contributed to the development of a democratic civil society. As already stated, the mission schools were decisive in the formation of Ghanaian leadership in the colonial era and for the independence process. The formation of the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG) in 1929 was largely motivated by the felt need for a united Christian voice (in this case Protestant/Evangelical), similar to that of the Catholics, and strong enough to criticise the government and to propose changes in laws and constitution.<sup>57</sup> CCG has played an important role in fighting for democratic principles in Ghanaian society.<sup>58</sup> In the preparation for the 2000 elections, the national political discussions were partly led by the Christian Council of Ghana in co-operation with both Catholics and Muslims, trying to bring cohesiveness among different religious groups.<sup>59</sup>

The proliferation of voluntary associations, particularly in the form of NGOs, is a response to the inherited poverty and the dismal state of Ghana's economy.<sup>60</sup> According to Omenyo there are over two hundred NGOs operating in Ghana in both rural and urban areas, as non-profit organisations with voluntary membership.<sup>61</sup> There is, therefore, no doubt that Ghanaian society, particularly in later years, has provided a fertile soil for establishment of voluntary associations, whether political parties, relief NGOs or mission movements. The majority, however, are religious, following practices in Sub-Saharan Africa where "the participation in religious organisations is the most prevalent form of associational life".<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Gifford 1998:68

<sup>58</sup> Aboagye-Mensah, Robert, 'The Church and Democracy in Africa: The Case of the Christian Council of Ghana', *Evangel* 1996:57

<sup>59</sup> Ankrah, Jonathan and Anthony Koomson, eds., *Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Ghana – The Monitoring Report of the Religious Bodies in Ghana Observation Team*, 2000:ii

<sup>60</sup> Omenyo 2006:12

<sup>61</sup> Omenyo 2006:13

<sup>62</sup> Gifford 1998:109. Gifford quotes Chazan, Mortimer, Ravenhill and Rothchild, *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1992), 92



### **3. Emergence of Evangelical Mission Movements**

Evangelical mission movements in Ghana began to emerge in the 1970s. There were a few earlier initiatives in terms of sending Ghanaian missionaries within and outside the country, mainly through foreign missions. The growth of the AICs in the second half of the twentieth century was partially due to their missionary effort reaching different parts of the country and the Ghanaian diaspora. The same could be said of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements.

The mainstream Evangelical churches concentrated in the south had slowly started to reach the northern part of Ghana, but the initiatives were lukewarm. There were prejudices against people in the north who came to the south for the low-status jobs.<sup>63</sup> This tension between north and south with roots in tribalism had been reinforced by the fact that the British ruled the regions differently. The north was a British territory while the south was a colony favoured by financial investments and greater freedom. This was the reason why some mission organisations were never allowed to enter the north.

The expansion of all these churches had also the goal of establishing denominational branches. The mission movements that emerged in more recent years have had, with important exceptions, a more cross-cultural and inter-denominational character.

#### **3.1. Developments of Mission Movements**

One important element in understanding the growth of mission organisations from the 1970s is, of course, the legacy of foreign missions and the translated paradigms. Even if

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<sup>63</sup> Campbell, Ross, interview May 2007

the inheritance was weak in terms of educating, mobilising and preparing national churches for mission activity, the model was embedded in the church system in Ghana. Evangelism and mission had their natural place in the way churches functioned, although focusing primarily on the immediate surroundings.

Migration of people from the north to the south, and particularly to urban centres such as Kumasi and Accra, provided a mission field in the neighbourhood of local congregations and some initiatives were taken to evangelise the newcomers. WEC International, which had missionaries working among tribes in the north, designated a missionary, Ross Campbell, to work in the south with the specific task of encouraging national leaders and pastors to reach the migrants.

A strategy of involving Evangelical churches in this challenge was developed in order to deal with north-south prejudices, create awareness among church leaders about the needs in the north but also among the northern immigrants in the south. Pastors and leaders were trained, starting with their understanding of conversion, to show them the need for a cross-cultural outreach strategy.<sup>64</sup> The Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) was the first denomination to start ethnic churches in Accra and the model was presented in seminars led by Campbell. The example was soon replicated by others such as the Church of Pentecost, the largest denomination in the country today.

The strong revivals, particularly in the years of 1971 and 1972, are mentioned by Ghanaian church leaders as a decisive motivation for the establishment of bold goals for expansion and outreach. The Scripture Union (SU) played an important role backing up these revivals and training national leadership, especially after establishing contact with

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<sup>64</sup> Campbell, interview 2007

local churches.<sup>65</sup> The annual Easter consultations held by the SU became meeting points for leaders and for the formation of new strategies for the evangelisation of unreached regions. A training programme for pastors came out of this newborn interest for expansion that tended to consider four areas: church growth theory, analysis of the denominational growth, practical principles for church planting and establishment of objectives and goals.<sup>66</sup>

Other conferences also had an impact on the emerging Ghanaian leadership. A follow-up conference to the Lausanne Conference in Switzerland was organised in Ghana in 1977, promoting cross-cultural mission and a holistic approach to missionary work. Eight years later, the Nigerian Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA) convened a consultation in Jos for African church leaders which was well-attended by Ghanaians and resulted in mission initiatives in several West African countries. The theme of this first West African regional mission consultation was “Mobilising indigenous missions for the harvest”.<sup>67</sup>

A deep financial and social crisis hit Ghana in 1983, provoking a famine in the country and the migration of many Ghanaians, increasing the number of refugees and invited workers among the Ghanaian diaspora. Many of these migrants were active in their home churches and they founded new churches in the places where they settled. In many cases, links were established to churches and denominations back in Ghana and pastors were sent to their countrymen in foreign nations. A significant number of Ghanaian missionaries work today in these diasporic communities (sent mainly by

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<sup>65</sup> Scripture Union is a British inter-denominational mission organisation founded in 1867 ([www.scriptureunion.org.uk](http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk))

<sup>66</sup> Campbell, interview 2007

<sup>67</sup> Ojo, Matthews, ‘The Dynamics of Indigenous Charismatic Missionary Enterprises in West Africa’, in Ezemadu, Reuben, ed., *Models, Issues and Structures of Indigenous Missions in Africa*, 2006:148

denominational mission boards) and ethnic churches are growing in European countries. Connections to diaspora have also favoured the sending churches in Ghana, making connections with more affluent societies and securing financial resources for the development of internal evangelisation.

Closely related to the emergence of mission movements are the surveys and consultations organised by the Ghana Evangelism Committee (GEC) in 1989 and in 1993. These studies highlighted the challenges in the country, resulting in the formation of new mission agencies as well as mission secretariats in most denominations. In the dialogue with mission leaders in Ghana, the consultations promoted by GEC are often mentioned as being the 'eye-opener', helping them to see the situation in the country and understand the responsibility of the Ghanaian church in participating in the evangelisation of other places. The survey of 1989 was carried out in all the regions of the country and the main results published. The update of 1993 made a comparison with the earlier statistical material and was also published by the GEC.<sup>68</sup> These handbooks are still the best available material on the situation of Evangelical churches and missions in Ghana.

The GEC surveys generated a new sense of partnership and collaboration between Evangelical churches, historically divided and generally concerned with the growth of AICs and Catholic parishes. An outcome of the GEC consultation in 1989 was the formation of the Ghana Evangelical Missions Association (GEMA), founded by thirty mission organisations, including both denominational and inter-denominational missions. The membership grew to fifty-one members in 1995 and new agencies joined

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<sup>68</sup> *Ghana Evangelism Committee, National Church Survey – Facing the Unfinished Task of the Church in Ghana* (Accra: GEC, 1989) and *National Church Survey – Facing the Unfinished Task of the Church in Ghana Update 1993* (Accra: GEC, 1993)

in recent years. However, there was also another compelling reason to found GEMA, the decree of June 1989, in which the government required that all churches should be registered and pay a high fee for doing so. When GEMA started some of the organisations joined in order to find a solution to this registration requirement. The idea was to appeal for a co-operative fee paid through GEMA for all its members as one religious body.<sup>69</sup>

A further significant contribution to the emergence and growth of mission initiatives in Ghana has been the influence from the worldwide Evangelical community. The stimulus has come through conferences, such as those sponsored by the Lausanne Movement, The World Evangelical Alliance, The World Council of Churches and the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement. Individuals who have been active in the country have also played an important role, such as Seth Anyomi, head of GEMA for more than 10 years.

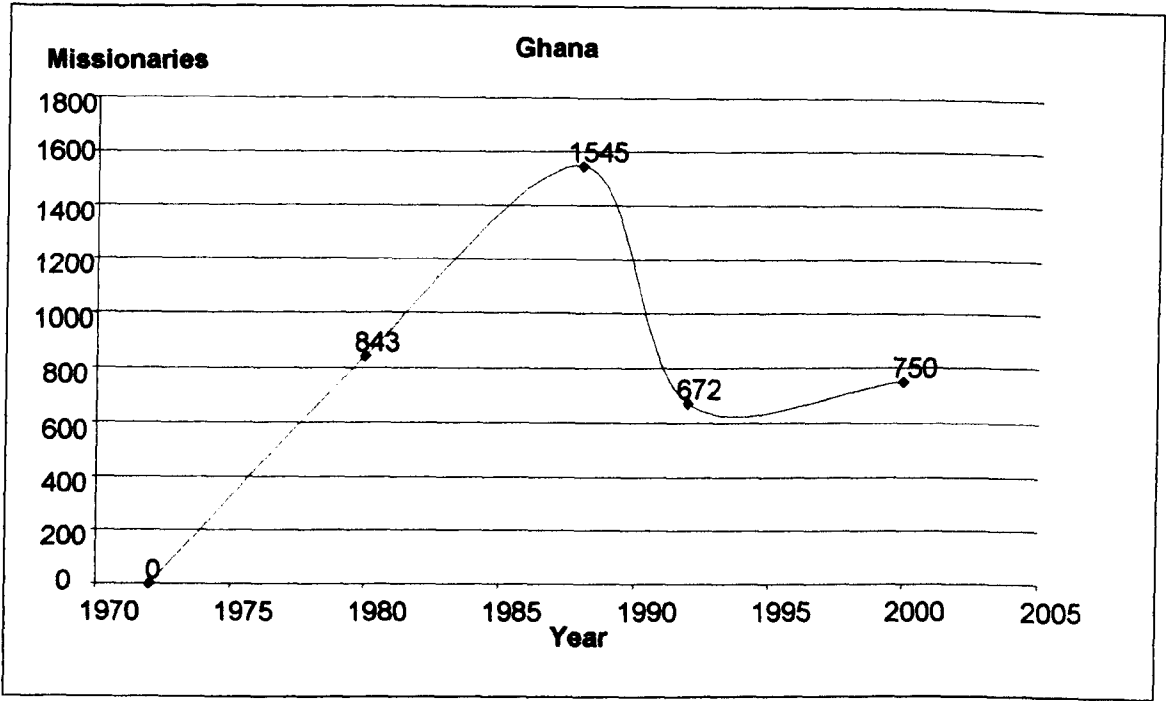
### **3.2. Characteristics of Ghanaian Mission Organisations**

Based on field studies, interviews and material provided by mission organisations, some characteristics of mission movements in Ghana can be identified. The growth of mission initiatives in the last thirty years is seen both in the number of sending structures as well as in the number of missionaries.

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<sup>69</sup> Campbell, interview 2007

Graph 6: Number of Ghanaian missionaries from 1972 to 2000<sup>70</sup>



Graph 6 shows an increase of missionaries since the 1970s, although the curve went down in the second half of the 1980s and has only partially recovered in later years. There are probably several explanations for this that are connected with the way the title ‘missionary’ has been defined in different phases and the influence of financial resources to keep missionaries on the field. In spite of the financial crisis in the 1980s, missionaries were sent out through sacrificial efforts by national churches and partnerships with organisations outside the country. Many mission leaders went abroad in order to find partners willing to invest in the emerging movements.<sup>71</sup> Certainly the higher figure in 1988 of more than 1,500 missionaries is too optimistic and represents all kinds of church workers linked to mission organisations, but could also denote the enthusiasm related to the GEC surveys and the initial funding from outside the country.

<sup>70</sup> The statistics are from: Ref. 1972, 1980 and 1988 from Pate, Larry, *From Every People* (1989); Ref. 1993 from Johnstone 1993; Ref. 2000 from Johnstone and Mandryk 2001. There are no later statistics available

<sup>71</sup> Campbell, interview 2007

The trend from the year 2000 onwards seems to be one of slow growth, although no official statistics are available.

Out of the twenty-two organisations that were visited twelve are mission agencies or denominational mission departments with a national base and Ghanaian missionaries. The total number of mission organisations in Ghana is sixty, according to Patrick Johnstone, however, not all sixty would fit into the definition of a mission movement used in this study.<sup>72</sup> Out of the twelve national organisations, seven are inter-denominational and five are denominational. One of the missions, the Church of Pentecost, was founded before 1970 (1939), three were started during the 1970s, three in the 1980s and five in the 1990s.<sup>73</sup>

Two missions are direct branches of a foreign mission (Pioneers Africa and WEC International). The others have been founded through the initiative of a national leader (five), a decision made by the denomination (two) or a group of leaders from different denominations deciding to start an agency (three). An element of entrepreneurialism is clearly seen in the emergence of Ghanaian mission movements. The leadership style is very often based on one strong leader with a tendency towards more autocratic management. As seen in the discussion on leadership styles within voluntary associations, leadership in NSCs, particularly in countries where democracies are young, tends to rely on power structures often based on cultural values and informal popular agreements.

Theoretically, most missions function as democratic organisations with a board or a council that gives them their legal status. In practice, the executive leadership is strong

<sup>72</sup> Johnstone and Mandryk 2001:275

<sup>73</sup> See a summary of the results of the Field Research in Ghana in Appendix 2

and make the everyday decisions. In some cases the board does not gather and the leaders have to decide for themselves what to do. The denominational missions follow the leadership model that their denominational structure has with more staff involved. The inter-denominational agencies work with less bureaucracy and a flatter leadership structure. Often they do not have the same financial base for hiring people and depend more on volunteers.

Asked about aspects of society that had influenced the founding of the missions, few mission leaders identified external factors. One plausible reason for this is the spiritual element assumed in some Christian contexts, attributing the origin of any mission movement to a purely God-given impulse. Another possibility is that the leaders had never reflected on the possibility of their call to start a mission being the result of other factors in society such as social, political and economic issues. Nonetheless, three mission directors mentioned that the political situation in the country had been important, especially concerning the independence of the country and the process of takeover by nationals in leadership positions. Two leaders mentioned sociological factors such as poverty and the need for education. Six of them saw internal factors as being more decisive for the formation of the mission, mainly in connection with the lack of missionary vision and concern among national churches.

Mission organisations are involved in a variety of activities with a clear tendency to prioritise evangelism, church planting and biblical training. Not surprisingly, social projects and schools are often part of the ministry, particularly when working among poor communities. The aspect of credibility is often mentioned as a reason for holistic missionary action, although the needy situation of people is the main motivation for engaging in relief work. It has also been easier to find sponsors for social projects than



for evangelisation and church planting. Schools are the most traditional and most common form of social projects even today. In some cases there is clear recognition that social projects are good instruments for attracting people to the churches. For some, mission work includes the social dimension as an integrated part of the stated vision and ideology, and should not be used as a pretext to convert people.

The number of missionaries varies from just a few to over a hundred. The twelve studied organisations have a total of 286 Ghanaian missionaries, comprising 38% of the 750 reported in Johnstone's statistics (both within and outside the country).<sup>74</sup> The denominational organisations have an average of 35.6 missionaries per mission and the inter-denominational have an average of 14.7 missionaries per mission. The difference is explained by the fact that denominational missions have a stronger financial base in local churches and are able to use the denominational structure for their missionary work. Inter-denominational agencies depend on funds from a variety of churches and individuals without the same institutional loyalty that denominations require of their member bodies. All together, the average is 23.8 missionaries per mission. When compared with Johnstone's statistics (recording an average of 12.5 missionaries per mission for the sixty missions), the twelve missions studied show a number of missionaries that is above the national average and are certainly among the more active and successful mission organisations in the country.

The cross-cultural emphasis of these mission associations is seen in the fact that all of them have people placed among ethnic groups and cultures different from their own in and outside the country. The majority of these missionaries are working in urban areas, concentrating efforts where they can reach more people, although a significant number

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<sup>74</sup> Johnstone and Mandryk 2001:275

are also serving in rural areas, particularly within Ghana. Three of the studied missions send missionaries to other countries specifically to work with the Ghanaian diaspora. All are denominational structures (Church of Pentecost, Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana and Evangelical Missionary Alliance), which reinforces the idea that church-related mission movements are keen to follow and care for 'their' members when they move abroad. The contact that inter-denominational missions have with the diasporic groups is more the opposite, receiving financial resources to carry out the missionary work within the country.

Finances are a big challenge for all the missions interviewed. The difficult economic situation of the country and the lack of tradition in the churches for giving to mission, make the financial base weak and unstable. Generally, however, the mission organisations depend on national churches for their finances. Some have private donors in the country and half of the agencies receive subsidies from abroad in co-operation with churches in Europe and North America or with international mission organisations. Foundations in the global North are also an important source of funds for some missions. The denominational mission departments, as already seen, tend to have a stronger base in terms of structure and finances, owing to the expected fidelity of churches towards their denomination, but also because of opportunities to use the denominational headquarters as their office. Nonetheless, younger denomination mission boards, such as the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana, also struggle with lack of financial resources, as revealed in the case studies that follow.

In the 1980s many churches in Ghana added to their names words like 'international', 'global', 'world', in an attempt to move further and establish branches in other countries and some of them had founded churches among the diaspora. The migration as a result

of the famine and the financial crisis in the country contributed to the growth of those diasporic communities and it was not surprising that Evangelical churches grew among them.

The mission models used by Ghanaian missions tend to be based on the ones seen in the Western organisations, although adapted to the local contexts. One of the innovative structures is the Torchbearers Mission, a mission movement described in the next section. The Church of Pentecost, which will also be described in more detail, is an example of a denominational structure that has successfully contextualised its liturgy and strategy.

#### **4. Case Studies of Mission Movements**

Four mission organisations are described in more detail, such as their origin, founding leadership, main objectives, strategies, basic developments, governance and finances. These missions represent different models of mission structures in Ghana, as in the chapters on Brazil and India:

- The first is a mainline church, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana, coming out of foreign missionary work and one of the most engaged denominations in cross-cultural mission.
- The second is an international inter-denominational mission, WEC International that has originated a national movement, the Christian Outreach Fellowship and been probably the most influential agency in promoting cross-cultural mission in the country.

- The third is one of the newer ‘faith missions’, the Torchbearers, typifying the trend among non-denominational initiatives.
- The fourth is a Pentecostal missionary church structure, the Church of Pentecost, which has grown to be the largest Evangelical denomination and the strongest mission movement in Ghana.

#### **4.1. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana (EPC)<sup>75</sup>**

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana (EPC) has its roots in the Bremen Mission from Germany that came to Ghana in 1847. The EPC was officially established in 1991 after a split with the original denomination, owing to theological disagreement, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church Ghana (without ‘of’).

The EPC is keen to affirm that they are the true heirs of the Bremen tradition, in theology and ecclesiastical practice, tracing its foundation back to 1847 when German missionaries arrived to work among the Ewe people. This explains also the strong emphasis on missionising among the Ewe groups within Ghana and in the neighbouring countries. In the vision statement of the EPC it is said that the church is “committed holistically to the Great Commission.”<sup>76</sup>

In 1995 the EPC decided to take a step out to unreached groups in Ghana, challenged by the research done by the Ghana Evangelism Committee in 1993. Missionaries were sent to the Kokomba area in the north and in 2001 there were eighty congregations among the Kokombas, owing to the openness of the people to Christianity. In spite of a strong

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<sup>75</sup> The information about the EPC is from interview with the S. Y. Kwami, director of Mission and Evangelism of the EPC, and two booklets published by the EPC in 2001, *New Frontiers in Missions* and *Good Reports*

<sup>76</sup> EPC, *New Frontiers in Missions*, 2001:39

Islamic presence in the region, the Kokombas had remained as animists, which made it easier to evangelise them.

In 2001 a mission secretariat was formed and S. Y. Kwami was appointed as director of Mission and Evangelism. A programme was launched by this mission department with an annual 'Awareness Week' that has been held in local congregations, with specific material produced for that every year. The idea was to create an understanding for mission among local churches and the need for funding the missionary outreach and for training the candidates. Until then the leaders had been trained by the Christian Leadership Institute in Accra and other inter-denominational seminaries. In the same year, the denomination started theological training for the Ewe-speaking and Kokomba pastors.

The main challenge of the EPC, according to Kwami, is financial. In spite of the history of the Bremen mission, there is a lack of finances. Today all the resources come from local churches but there is not enough to fully support the missionaries. Most of the work is done by volunteers without a fixed salary or economic compensation for their services. The advancement of the organisation relies heavily upon lay people taking the Gospel to other places and forming new congregations. The strategy has also included starting schools, especially among illiterate people in tribal groups in the north. This financial shortage is also faced by other churches established by foreign missions where external funds have supported most of the institutional work as well as the salaries of local pastors and mission outreach.

The EPC engages in missionary work among the Ewe in the neighbouring countries of Togo (twelve congregations), Benin (one congregation) and the Ivory Coast (one

congregation), using the French language. A congregation has also been founded in London among the Ghanaian diaspora.

When interviewing the mission director of the EPC in 2002 I found that he had just formed a mission secretariat with five staff members, showing the slow progress of the denomination in establishing an appropriate structure for their missionary work. Kwami's leadership has been crucial for the achievements so far, being the main champion of the missionary work in the denomination. The developments in later years have occurred quickly and information supplied for a joint General Council in Accra in 2004, involving both the older EPC Ghana and the EPC, stated that the former still had 143,000 members in 750 congregations and the latter 440,000 members in 1,865 congregations.<sup>77</sup>

The EPC exemplifies the type of mission movement that comes out of a Western church and has worked through its dependence on foreign leadership and financial resources. As seen in the discussion on voluntary associations, the tendency of this kind of organisational structures is to become bureaucratic and stagnate. In the case of the EPC the split gave new injection to the churches involved and opened space for new leadership to emerge, creating a new momentum of growth.

#### **4.2. WEC International and the Christian Outreach Fellowship - COF<sup>78</sup>**

WEC International arrived in northern Ghana in 1940 where the mission obtained a plot of land. The missionaries evangelised the villages in the region and small congregations

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<sup>77</sup> The General Council in Accra 2004 was announced by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches at [www.warc.ch/24gc/04.html](http://www.warc.ch/24gc/04.html)

<sup>78</sup> The information is based on personal interviews, booklets and brochures produced by WEC and COF and material from June Whittaker on WEC history in Ghana

started to be formed. In 1947, at the request of the British Government, some medical work began, which was called the Leprosy and Medical Crusade. This soon became the main arm of the WEC work and leprosy treatment centres, outreach clinics and colonies were set up, including a farm and other facilities for rehabilitation of leprosy patients.<sup>79</sup> During the 1950s and 1960s, WEC missionaries established churches mainly in the north of the country through direct evangelisation, medical work and radio programmes. The churches were given the name 'The People's Church' and a national leadership was developed.

COF is a national inter-denominational mission agency started in 1974 by a group of church leaders from different denominations, linked to the work of WEC.<sup>80</sup> The initial idea of the mission arose from the realisation that the strategy used by foreign mission organisations in the northern part of Ghana had not been successful and there was need for a different evangelistic approach.<sup>81</sup>

The vision and motivation for the mission came out of the desire to reach the unreached people groups in Ghana and in other countries, which was something new for Ghanaian churches at that point. The Scripture Union (SU) had a retreat every year during Easter called Easter House Party and in 1974 the focus was on the situation in the north of Ghana where few Evangelical churches existed. The conclusion of the retreat was that if everybody continued to establish churches in the south, the whole nation would never be reached. So far most churches had done 'maintenance ministry', just trying to keep what the foreign missions had left. The motivation, however, was not only strategic. COF developed a theology of mission based primarily on the New Testament and the

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<sup>79</sup> Whittaker, June, *WEC Ghana Field History*, 2003:1

<sup>80</sup> COF describes itself as a "trans-denominational indigenous missionary society", according to a Leaflet of the mission, 2002

<sup>81</sup> Interview with Emmanuel Anukun-Dabson, Field Director of COF, November 2002

understanding of the missional task of African churches. The theological rationale included sending trained people to other places to establish churches contextualised to their milieu. The themes of voluntarism and sacrifice were also present and missionaries were required to be willing to leave comfort and social security in order to work in less developed areas of the country.<sup>82</sup> The expressed motivation was thus very similar to the explicit motives seen in mission movements in the West, particularly in the pioneer stage, such as compassion and the desire for non-Christians to convert, obedience to the biblical mandate and expansion of the church.

In 1976, the organisation was registered as COF and the constitution and the policies were formed. In 1987 the mission was able to move into its own office. A turning point for COF was in 1988 when Emmanuel Anukun-Dabson was sent as the first missionary to the north for church planting, inaugurating a new epoch of the mission. In 1994, three training programmes were launched: the Modular Evangelism Training, Church Planters Seminar and Church Planters Institute. The objective was to make disciples and the programmes were directed to local churches. The result was, according to Anukun-Dabson, an 'astronomic growth', with a multiplying effect of leadership training in many places. The programmes proved to be successful with courses and seminars taking place at both national and regional levels.<sup>83</sup>

The financial support comes from local churches, private donors and some subsidies from churches and missions abroad. Some of the missionaries sent by COF come with a denominational support and, consequently, plant churches for their denomination. COF has a unique categorisation of missionaries:

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<sup>82</sup> COF Leaflet, 2002

<sup>83</sup> Anukun-Dabson, interview, November 2002



1. Allegiances – those who are sent out by COF and for whom the mission has full responsibility;
2. Associates – those who are sent out by their denominations and have their main support from their own churches; and
3. Affiliates – those who have already started churches but need some kind of support or back up for identification, accountability, reference, etc.

In 2002 COF had twenty-six cross-cultural missionaries in the category of allegiances, twenty-four working in Ghana and two in Togo.

The leadership of COF is multi-denominational and a board is elected in the Annual General Meeting, following the by-laws. According to Anukun-Dabson, these meetings have not been held in recent years and the board is not active. The decisions are made by the executives in the COF office. The success of the mission is calculated by the number of churches planted (245 from 1981 to 2002), of souls brought to Christ (thousands) and of trained leaders (more than 600).<sup>84</sup> The churches have been handed over to different denominations and the ongoing influence of COF in relation to these churches is through the training programmes.

WEC is again an example of an inter-denominational mission organisation, as already seen in the Brazilian case, which has, in more recent years, focused primarily on creating awareness about the missionary task and training local leaders for managing national mission initiatives. COF, the autochthonous mission movement that resulted mainly from the work of WEC, is thus an agency influenced by its foreign origin, retaining basic principles from the 'mother' organisation but at the same time having the

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<sup>84</sup> COF Leaflet, 2002

ability to develop its own standards and strategies according to specific contextual needs.

### **4.3. The Torchbearers<sup>85</sup>**

The Torchbearers is an inter-denominational mission organisation formed in 1988 when six people from different denominational backgrounds decided to start an autochthonous mission agency; three were Baptists, two Methodists and one Anglican. Some of them had been influenced by the Scripture Union and had cross-cultural experience through other mission organisations. The motivation behind their involvement was very much the same as seen in other mission movements in history and in the new sending countries, namely the desire to reach non-Christians in the country, with the ultimate aim of conversion to the Christian faith.<sup>86</sup>

The initial target was consequently the unreached ethnic groups within Ghana. In 1990, the mission started recruiting missionaries and the first were sent to the north of the country. New candidates joined the mission in the 1990s and missionaries left for other countries as well, focusing primarily on neighbouring nations. In 2002 the Torchbearers had four missionary couples working within Ghana, one couple in Malawi, and one couple working in sports ministry in Canada. In the case of Malawi and Canada, the missionaries are professionals who have joined the mission as ‘tent-makers’. The missionaries have formed and trained local teams, ensuring the continuity of the work that they started. Finances come mainly from individuals and churches in Ghana. Some financial contribution is also given by a Ghanaian church in the US. ‘Tent-makers’ are expected to raise their own support.

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<sup>85</sup> The information is based on personal interviews and leaflets produced by the mission

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Rev. Albert S. Ocran, General Director of Torchbearers, November 2002

The initial idea was not to start a denomination but to collaborate with others in planting churches and giving support. However, over the years, independent churches have been planted by some missionaries who have not found partner-churches in the neighbourhood and there has been need to link these together. The denomination, called Hope Foundation Churches, is independent from the mission agency, but the leadership of the Torchbearers give local congregations elementary teaching on Christian doctrines and ecclesiastical models.

The provision of a mission awareness programme is the key strategy for the promotion of its activities. The mission staff contact churches and leaders to ask them for an opportunity to talk about mission and to hold a seminar. Sometimes a neutral location is chosen, for example clubs and hotels, in which to bring those invited together. Some of the contacted churches and leaders become partners.

The Torchbearers is a good example of a Ghanaian, and African, mission organisation started through the initiatives of one or a few people without a formal link to church structures or international missions. Finances present a particular challenge for the Torchbearers, both for the missionaries that are sent out and for the home office and administration. The office was previously in the director's home but now the mission has a small office on the outskirts of Accra with three employees.<sup>87</sup> The Torchbearers is a true 'faith mission', following the model of Hudson Taylor and others in the history of Western missions, with no guarantee of financial support for the mission workers or for the central administration. It depends entirely on voluntary donations by churches and individuals and yet the mission survives and develops.

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<sup>87</sup> Torchbearers' Partners Letter 1,2 and 3 quarter 2002

#### 4.4. The Church of Pentecost<sup>88</sup>

The Church of Pentecost is a denominational structure with an active mission department. The Church began in 1939 instigated by the Irish missionary James McKeown, who was sent by the Apostolic Church of Bradford, UK. Owing to doctrinal differences such as on the question of 'spiritual healing',<sup>89</sup> the original church was divided into the Christ Apostolic Church and the Gold Coast Apostolic Church. This second, led by McKeown, was renamed Ghana Apostolic Church in 1957 after the country's independence. On the advice of Kwame Nkrumah, the president of Ghana, the church adopted the name The Church of Pentecost in 1962, in order to prevent confusion over names.<sup>90</sup>

According to the mission statement of the Church of Pentecost, it "exists to bring all people everywhere to the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the proclamation of the Gospel, the planting of churches and the equipping of believers".<sup>91</sup> The strong emphasis on proclamation and church planting has resulted in an outstanding church growth within and outside Ghana. According to their own statistics, the total membership worldwide is almost 1.5 million, of which 80% are in Ghana. They have over 12,000 congregations, with branches on every continent and in fifty-seven countries. The spread of the church is rooted in Ghana's economic crisis of 1983, which forced Ghanaians, including many members of the CP, to search for jobs. Within the diaspora, churches were founded by personal initiatives that were later linked to the church organisation in their homeland.

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<sup>88</sup> The information is based on personal interviews, brochures produced by the CP, their official website and the booklet *Parting Words of Rev. James McKeown*

<sup>89</sup> Interview with S.K. Amegah, November 2002

<sup>90</sup> The Church of Pentecost website ([www.thechurchofpentecosthq.org/history.html](http://www.thechurchofpentecosthq.org/history.html))

<sup>91</sup> The Church of Pentecost website

The mission structure within the CP is based on having mission committees at different levels. Area, district and local committees promote the missionary work, organise and coordinate missionary activities and collect funds. The main decisions about the missionary work, both within and outside the country, are made by the Mission Board, which is led by a Missions Director. Funding comes basically from monthly offerings in the local churches and from the so-called Annual McKeown's Week when special donations are given to mission initiatives.

The main objective of the mission department of the CP is to establish new churches in Ghana and in other countries. The expansion of the denomination is not emphasised in the presentation of the missionary work but is clear when talking to leaders and analysing the reports. The worldwide perspective of the work is part of the mission statement, and the churches founded in other countries are called 'branches' in an obvious reference to the mother trunk.<sup>92</sup> The financial policy, a legacy from the founder, is towards economic independence, using the famous 'three-self formula'. There is also an emphasis on contextualised worship and liturgy, making the CP an ecclesiastical body somewhere in between the historic and the spiritual churches in Ghana.

#### **4.5. Comparing the Case Studies**

The four case studies show different models of mission movements active in Ghana today, particularly how they have developed and their distinctive characteristics. In three cases the initiative of one person or a small group of people has been decisive in establishing a mission sending structure. The exception is the Church of Pentecost where the development can not be attributed to one particular individual other than the

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<sup>92</sup> Ojo, Matthews, 2006:168

missionary that founded the original church. Both denominational structures have arisen out of church divisions, resulting in stronger emphasis on expansion and growth by the new leadership. This demonstrates that the churches have produced entrepreneurial leadership whilst older organisations have not given younger leaders the space they demanded.

There are clear links to the work of foreign missionaries through the older Bremen and Basel missions as well as younger mission organisations such as WEC and the Scripture Union. As a result, the national mission initiatives involved inherit ideas about missionary work and certainly benefited from the historical experience. Mission models have been translated into the Ghanaian context and the national churches have partially assimilated these paradigms of missionary activity. In relation to the self-missionising process, these mission movements also show a reaction against foreign models, and search ways to operate that are applicable to their own context and culture, and their limited resources. The political and economic situation of the country has forced these movements to adapt to current realities, looking for partnerships and co-operative ventures. The migration from north to south had strong influence on the strategy of mission organisations and denominations, leading to the establishment of congregations among migrants in the urban areas and later to pioneer work among their respective ethnic groups in the north.

Reaching out to less-evangelised parts of the country is the main goal for all four missions and the overall motivation for starting sending structures. The cross-cultural aspect of their work is closely connected to other ethnic groups in Ghana and the neighbouring countries and to diasporic groups. There are plans to work among non-Ghanaians in other countries but lack of financial resources prevents these from being

put into practice. The holistic approach is also common to these movements and is based on an inclusive theology of mission whilst recognising that funds are more readily available for social work than for traditional evangelism.

Finances are highlighted as the main problem, again with the exception of the Church of Pentecost, which seems to have been formed on different premises than other churches founded by missions, with a clear emphasis on self-financing and development based on national resources. The other three stress the participation of volunteers with less financial security given to their missionaries, as seen in traditional 'faith missions'.

All four measure their success in the number of converts, churches planted and missionaries sent, although giving different weight to each category. With the main motivation being to see converts to Christianity filling the churches, statistics become important and large numbers are reported in their literature and brochures, in the same way that Western entrepreneurial mission organisations evaluate their achievements. COF has a slightly different approach, considering their accomplishment more in terms of preparing leaders and their efficiency in training others.

## **5. Analysis of the Relation between Key Factors and the Emergence of Mission Movements**

Based on the historic review, the analysis of voluntary associations in the country and the developments of mission organisations, it is possible to relate the proposed key factors to the emergence of mission movements in Ghana. The self-missionising process that has emerged in more recent years owes a great deal to the ecclesiastical models that

were brought to Ghana and assimilated by the established churches, although contextualised forms of mission activities are currently used. The synergy in the combination of specific internal, external and international factors has resulted in the emergence of Evangelical mission movements.

## **5.1. Internal Factors**

### **5.1.1. The existence of growing Evangelical churches with the explicit objective of expanding to other locations and countries**

The growth of Evangelical churches in Ghana is a confirmed reality, particularly as a result of the revivals in the 1970s and 1980s. The statistics provided by the Ghana Evangelism Committee (GEC) and international observers on the growth among Charismatic and Pentecostal churches, verify the strength of Christianity in the country. The studies carried out by the GEC in 1989 and updated in 1993 had an important impact on Ghanaian churches and mission organisations, resulting in new and bold strategies for reaching the less evangelised areas of the country.<sup>93</sup> According to the evaluation of several mission leaders, the GEC study created an awareness of the need to expand the churches. Clear objectives towards achieving this were integrated into the plans of different organisations. International perspectives were a fruit of that process, partly due to the fact that reaching out to different tribal and ethnic groups within Ghana automatically led to crossing borders into neighbouring countries inhabited by the same groups. The political borders, established by colonial powers, had in Ghana, as in many other African, Asian and Latin American countries, dispersed tribal and ethnic groups among two or more countries.

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<sup>93</sup> Ghana Evangelism Committee, *National Church Survey – Facing the Unfinished Task of the Church in Ghana*, 1989 and *National Church Survey Update* 1993



Another important factor leading to the expansion into other countries, particularly by denominational structures, is the presence of the Ghanaian diaspora; this has sometimes resulted in unplanned church planting. An example of this is the initiatives taken by lay members of the Church of Pentecost among the diaspora, for example starting local congregations and looking for connections with their ‘mother’ denomination back in Ghana. In other cases there has been an explicit strategy of founding churches among diaspora people. The many churches and mission organisations in Ghana seeking a global presence is particularly linked to the existence of (or the desire to establish) churches in diasporic groups in Europe and North America.

A more recent development is the strategy of missionary work among nationals in different countries, as seen in the bulletins and reports from mission organisations such as the Torchbearers and COF.<sup>94</sup>

### **5.1.2. A theology of mission that includes the needed motivation for expansion**

The legacy from foreign missionaries has not always been an elaborate and strong theology of mission. The emphasis, for the most part, has been on evangelisation and establishment of local churches and, consequently, the paradigm has been initiatives towards tribal groups in areas where the Christian faith had not been promoted. As in many other nations, mission organisations from outside were more concerned about expanding their work within the country’s borders, forming a strong national church (often with a rigid denominational pattern) and not stressing the need for involvement in international missions. The emphasis of the Anglican, the Bremen, the Basel and the Methodist mission societies, for example, and the national churches they produced, was on tribal groups within the country, as seen in the historical review. It was

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<sup>94</sup> In the pamphlet of COF the emphasis is on reaching the ‘unreached’ and all the missionaries are considered as cross-cultural workers

predominantly dissidents and non-conformists who broke with tradition and started churches and mission organisations with a cross-cultural ethos.

Various factors have changed that inherent mentality into an explicit theology of mission among church and mission leaders. One example is the work done by the Scripture Union through the different courses and training programmes that were offered. WEC and the autochthonous mission movement COF have also been influential in preparing leadership with a theological understanding of mission. Participation in international conferences and, especially, theological and inter-cultural studies of future mission leaders in the UK and the United States, have also contributed to a new vision of cross-cultural mission.<sup>95</sup>

The fact that the theological heritage was not clearly cross-cultural did not hinder the theology from being holistic.<sup>96</sup> In most cases the theology of mission is therefore integral, including both gospel proclamation aiming for conversion to the Christian faith, and social concern, seen in educational, health and community development projects. Even the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, known for their aggressive evangelism, operate social institutions, professional training, workshops and relief work. Three of the four major hospitals in Accra are owned by Pentecostal/Charismatic Agencies, two of them belong to the Church of Pentecost and one belongs to the Assemblies of God.<sup>97</sup>

In more recent years, this integral mission has been largely influenced by theologians such as Kwame Bediako and other scholars at the Akrofi-Christaller Centre outside

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<sup>95</sup> Personal interview with Seth Anyomi, November 2002

<sup>96</sup> Omenyo 2006:14

<sup>97</sup> Omenyo, 2006:20

Accra. Other Ghanaian thinkers have contributed to the development of a holistic approach to mission through the Christian Council of Ghana and other associations. Mission statements of local churches, denominations and mission organisations show a basic theological understanding of expansion and of social inclusion although, according to Anyomi, a more systematic and formalised theology of mission is still to be seen.<sup>98</sup>

Another important aspect of Ghanaian missiology today is related to the Africanisation process and is related to the debate on the so-called 'excluded middle' and the needed response to traditional religious beliefs. This is also seen by African leaders as a valuable contribution to global missiological reflection and the knowledge of spiritual realities as a motivation for participation in evangelistic efforts worldwide. Ezemadu affirms that, among other attributes, the "unwavering belief in the super-natural... placed the African Church in a position to contribute more towards the final push in world evangelisation".<sup>99</sup>

### **5.1.3. Entrepreneurial leadership in the churches organising mission associations**

Mission schools have had a decisive affect on the formation of Ghanaian leadership, as affirmed in the historical review, not only for ecclesiastical structures but also for secular society. Being the main educational institutions for many years, generations of Ghanaians were formed by colleges run by religious orders and Christian churches. The first president of the country and the key leader in the independence process, Kwame Nkrumah, studied at a Catholic school in western Ghana. Independence had the positive effect that nationals were encouraged to take over leadership positions in existing

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<sup>98</sup> Seth Anyomi, e-mail interview, March 2007

<sup>99</sup> Ezemadu 2006:foreword

organisations and to start new ones according to specific interests and needs, whether political, social or religious.

The many examples of people initiating voluntary associations, such as mission organisations, show the existence of an entrepreneurial management style among Ghanaian Evangelical leaders. Nine out of the twelve mission organisations studied in the Accra region were started through personal initiatives, in most cases by a single founder.<sup>100</sup> Again, a great part of this is due to the Scripture Union, WEC, and other organisations working in the country (as seen in the case studies) which invested in the formation of a leadership with a positive view of the church and its opportunities for growth. In 1974, the Scripture Union gathered Christian leaders for an Easter House Party where a serious discussion took place about the strategy used by Ghanaian churches so far, leading to several initiatives and the formation of mission associations such as COF and the Torchbearers.

#### **5.1.4. Available personnel and financial resources**

In Ghana, as in Brazil, voluntarism has been an important factor in the establishment of mission movements. The organisations depend on volunteers at both managerial and the administrative level. The number of missionary candidates for different outreach projects has also been one of the strengths of Ghanaian mission movements. Even though the numbers have not increased in recent years at the rate they did in the 1980s, there is continuous growth. According to mission leaders in Ghana, the main problem is not the availability of personnel but lack of financial resources to support them when they go out as missionaries. The lay movement, present in the diasporic groups, and Christian professionals working in secular jobs in other countries and starting local

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<sup>100</sup> According to the field study done in November 2002 in Accra

congregations, should also be considered part of the advance of the missionary enterprise.

The difficult financial situation in the country is reflected in the mission organisations and lack of finances is therefore one of the weaknesses in the Ghanaian mission movements. On the other hand, shared efforts to raise support have partially compensated the shortage of funds. The Church of Pentecost is an interesting exception since it has been able to develop mission projects without external help, relying only on its own denominational structure.

## **5.2. External Factors**

### **5.2.1. A society with liberty to establish voluntary associations and with existing models of voluntarism**

As discussed earlier, there has been a relatively great freedom in Ghana to establish private and voluntary associations. Models for voluntarism have primarily been mission organisations and social projects. However, increasingly with the independence process, political parties and associations for non-political or religious interest groups have emerged. Models have also been imported through international contacts and civil society to provide many of the services that the government has failed to offer.

Christian churches have had an important role in African civil society. Gifford affirms that “religious groups are widely admitted to be the strongest form of associational life

in contemporary Africa”.<sup>101</sup> And more directly related to the Protestant churches he says that

A strong correlation has long been noted between Protestantism and democracy, stemming from Protestantism’s emphasis on the individual, its democratic rather than hierarchical church structures, and its encouragement of economic enterprise.<sup>102</sup>

In the Ghanaian case, both Roman Catholic and Protestant churches and organisations have contributed to the development of democratic institutions in society and defended principles of religious freedom and social justice. The Evangelical mission movements that emerged in the last thirty years have benefited from that freedom and adopted a holistic approach to their mission task.

### **5.2.2. Growing economy in the society and resources in the churches, favouring mission initiatives**

It is doubtful whether the economic factor has favoured the emergence of mission organisations in Ghana. There is not much of a growing economy in comparison to some other developing countries. The Ghanaian economy has been turbulent since independence. Traditionally based on agriculture, mining, forestry and fishing, the economy has been limited in recent years to the first two activities, with some new income coming in from tourism. Cocoa production began in the 1890s and expanded rapidly but between 1930 and 1940 cocoa prices fell and the country entered in a deep economic depression and only recovered in the 1950s, becoming one of the strongest economies in Africa up to the time of independence. The years between 1957 and 1966 were extremely difficult and an external debt of US\$ 1 billion was accumulated. With international investments and the injection of funds, the economy saw modest growth

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<sup>101</sup> Gifford 1998:20

<sup>102</sup> Gifford 1998:22

and the inflation dropped from 122.85% in 1983 to about 12% in 1992.<sup>103</sup> Today, Ghana's economy is still fragile and the external debt is a major problem.

There are two sides to a weak economy. On one hand, there is not much money circulating in society, which also affects churches and voluntary associations. On the other hand, shortage of funds in the government and official institutions leads to a need for solidarity and for private initiatives, compensating for the lack of basic services. It also attracts investments from richer countries, usually channelled through NGOs and, in this case, through Christian relief organisations. It is not a coincidence that the majority of mission movements that have emerged in Ghana have a strong emphasis on social projects, not exclusively due to a holistic theological understanding of mission.

The main concentration of resources occurs in Accra, the capital, where a growing middle-class populates the mainstream churches. It is interesting that the Church of Pentecost, formed by people from all different social classes, is the denomination with the most rapid investment in health and education projects. Administered by Pentecost Social Services (PENTOS), 99% of all investment comes from national sources in local churches, owing to teaching on solidarity and on giving.<sup>104</sup>

Although there are some mission movements in central and northern parts of Ghana, the ones with a more cross-cultural and international ministry are also concentrated in Accra. Apart from benefiting from a stronger local economy, communication facilities are important, particularly in the partnership with organisations from other countries. In later years, some mission organisations have started local fundraising campaigns and encouraged the establishment of business activities to support their objectives. One

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<sup>103</sup> Omenyo 2006:10

<sup>104</sup> Omenyo 2006:16,18

example is that of a successful chicken farmer outside Accra who invests all his profit in a particular mission organisation.

### **5.2.3. Social, political and ecclesiastical factors**

The outbreak of the First World War and the expulsion of missionaries of German background from the British colonies, resulting in an unplanned opportunity for national leaders to assume leadership, is one example from Ghanaian history of an external political factor contributing to imperative changes in mission. The emergence of the AICs was another important step for autochthonous structures to be established, favoured by local community leaders who saw in the movements a true revival of traditional African culture.

The nationalising process after Independence in 1957 created a new mentality among Evangelical churches. The majority of church leaders had been trained in mission schools and analytical reflections tended to be critical of imported models, favouring new forms of ecclesiastical order. The freedom given to establishment of new associations was amply exercised by popular initiatives, resulting in an immense variety of sects, churches and religious organisations. In spite of the governmental effort to control this development, the proliferation continued.

There have not been any visa restrictions in Ghana hindering the participation of expatriates or sending out of missionaries to other countries, but there has been some control from the government. The Africa Christian Mission, for example, has an immigration quota of twelve missionary families at any given time.<sup>105</sup> The diaspora, largely formed as a result of the crisis of 1983, has had a positive influence in the

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<sup>105</sup> Seth Anyomi, e-mail interview, March 2007



emergence of mission movements and is seen by the government as an additional source for the Ghanaian economy, owing to a constant transfer of resources.

### **5.3. International Factors**

#### **5.3.1. International exposure and contacts**

International networking and contacts are a significant factor in the emergence of mission movements in Ghana. Participation in mission conferences encouraged church leaders to promote mission departments in their respective denomination and the formation of mission agencies with a more para-church structure. A few Ghanaians attended the Lausanne Conference on World Evangelisation in Lausanne 1974 and a consultation was held in Ghana 1977 as a follow up to the Lausanne conference. The consultation in Jos, Nigeria, in 1985 has already been mentioned as being decisive for the growth of mission associations in many countries in West Africa. Later congresses convened by international Evangelical networks such as the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement, the World Evangelical Alliance, the Billy Graham Association and the Third World Mission Association, have been attended by Ghanaian leaders and have influenced the formation of a missionary mindset. Some leaders have studied in North America and Europe, receiving missiological training that has been put in practice when returning to Ghana.

Effects of globalisation have also been seen in Ghana, for example the development of IT and other means of communication, facilitating contact with global networks and with like-minded Christians in other parts of the world. An interesting fact is that many of the New Charismatic movements have drawn people from both mainstream and AICs, owing to their more globalised worship and their international flavour.

### 5.3.2. Diasporic Groups

Mission to and through diasporic groups has been a fruitful strategy and has encouraged the development of sending structures. These communities have given opportunities for training of mission candidates and have served as bridges to local cultures, often leading to the establishment of churches among nationals. The diasporic groups have also contributed to the financial support of home-churches and mission projects in Ghana and neighbouring countries.

Particularly in Europe, Ghanaian 'ethnic' churches have seen a significant growth, starting with diasporic groups in countries such as the UK and Germany and eventually reaching out also to local residents. Walls underlines the importance of the African churches in Europe saying that

It is clear that these churches are among the few expanding sectors of European Christianity. It is also clear that they are beginning to have an impact on the indigenous Western population, for some of whom... immigrants from Africa or Asia provide the first contact with Christianity as a living faith.<sup>106</sup>

Jenkins agrees with Walls and cites the example of Great Britain that hosts today some 1,500 missionaries from fifty nations, many of them from African countries.<sup>107</sup> Churches were started among immigrants who were often discriminated against by the mainstream Anglican and other Protestant churches that they tried to join.<sup>108</sup> Some of these churches are today among the largest mega-churches in the UK with a multi-ethnic membership, including many Britons.

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<sup>106</sup> Walls, Andrew, 'Mission and Migration: The Diaspora Factor in Christian History', *Journal of African Christian Thought*, 2002:10-11

<sup>107</sup> Jenkins, Philip, *God's Continent: Christianity, Islam and Europe's Religious Crisis*, 2007:89

<sup>108</sup> Jenkins 2007:92

### **5.3.3. National associations and international co-operation**

GEMA, the national association of mission organisations, has played an important role in the last decade in connecting Ghanaian leaders and organisations to the worldwide network of Evangelical missions. The link to peer associations such as NEMA in Nigeria, AMTB in Brazil and IMA in India has facilitated exchange of experiences and sharing of structural models.

The growth of Evangelical churches has attracted international organisations to the country, establishing Ghanaian branches and offering specific training in the area of mission. WEC is a good example of an international organisation that invested in Ghana and created a link between Ghanaian churches and churches abroad. Co-operation with international missions has also created opportunities for Ghanaian organisations to promote their objectives and expand beyond the country's borders.

## **Conclusion**

The key internal, external and international factors that have been identified as decisive for the emergence of mission movements in a particular country are all present in Ghana with important variations. According to the analysis above, the most influential factors are: the growth of the Evangelical churches with a desire to expand geographically; a theological interpretation of the Christian mandate to 'go to the nations'; the formation of a leadership with initiative, exposed to the influence and encouragement from international contacts and with freedom to establish associations within the country. External social and ecclesiastical aspects have had some influence, particularly in the nationalisation process, while the economy of the country has been more of a hindrance

than a help, apart from the exceptions already mentioned. The fact that most of these key factors have been present in a significant way compensates for the weakness of the financial situation. It is also important to remember that partnerships with churches and mission organisations in other countries have counterbalanced the lack of resources, giving Ghanaian mission movements the opportunity to participate on the worldwide mission arena.

The translation process continues through the Ghanaian mission movements and their sending out of missionaries to new cross-cultural contexts. However it is not just a copy of mission from the OSCs but rather self-missionising initiatives that grow out of contextualised ecclesiastical and missiological models. As Ghanaian missionaries reach out to mission fields of their own, a similar process happens in the receiving cultures where Ghanaian forms of Evangelicalism are assimilated and hopefully contextualised.

In Chapter Seven the main characteristics of mission organisations in Ghana are compared to those in Brazil and India, and attention is drawn to similarities and differences, particularly related to the key factors that have proved to be crucial for the emergence of mission movements.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **EVANGELICAL MISSION MOVEMENTS IN INDIA**

This chapter focuses on Evangelical mission movements in India. It follows the same outline as the earlier chapters on Brazil and Ghana, identifying the presence of the key factors that have determined the emergence and development of these mission organisations.

The chapter is divided into five parts. The first is a concise historical introduction to the religious background and the establishment of Evangelical churches in the country, describing the translation of the Christian faith and the attempts to assimilate and contextualise Christianity in India, setting the context in which the Indian mission movements have been founded. There then follows a brief discussion of the political and sociological factors that facilitated the establishment of voluntary associations in the context of Indian society. The third part is an analysis of the emergence and development of Indian mission organisations. These will be described in terms of church context, organisational models, leadership styles and sending strategies. Case-studies, in part four, provide specific information on how different mission movements develop and function. In part five, the main characteristics of Indian mission movements are related to the key factors that have determined the existence of those movements. A brief conclusion summarises the importance and influence of the key factors in relation to the emergence and development of Evangelical mission movements in India.

## 1. History of Christian Missions to India

One strong tradition in the Indian Christian Church claims that the apostle Thomas introduced the faith to India in the first century A.D.<sup>1</sup> However, the clearest evidence of the presence of Christian congregations in India is from the fourth century.<sup>2</sup> Indian Christianity most certainly starts with the establishment of churches from the Eastern tradition; indeed there may have been several instances of Christian Syrians and Persians coming and settling in India. Crosses dated from the seventh and eighth centuries found near Madras and in Kerala bear witness to the existence of Christian communities in South India.<sup>3</sup>

From the late thirteenth century onwards representatives of the Western tradition began to appear in India in the form of Franciscan friars.<sup>4</sup> In 1498 Vasco da Gama came to Calicut, introducing trade between Portugal and India. There were two main motives behind the Portuguese initiatives to explore and establish colonies: the desire for commerce through trade-posts and the expansion of the Catholic faith. Jesuit missionaries made important contributions to the establishment of Christianity in India, for example Robert de Nobili, who advocated the full Christian adaptation to, and accommodation of, local cultures.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> David, M.D., *Missions: Cross-Cultural Encounter and Change in Western India*, 2001:27; Spear, Percival, *India: A Modern History*, 1961:73

<sup>2</sup> David 2001:27; Neill, Stephen, *A History of Christianity in India*, Vol. I, 1984:49

<sup>3</sup> Firth, C. B., *An Introduction to Indian Church History*, 2003:33

<sup>4</sup> Firth 2003:37,38

<sup>5</sup> Padinjarekuttu, Isaac, *The Missionary Movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries and its Encounter with India*, 1995:45; Raj, P. Peter, 'Robert de Nobili: An Indigenous Foreigner' in Hedlund, Roger, ed., *Christianity is Indian – The Emergence of an Indigenous Community*, 2004:106

The Mughal Empire of India began in 1526 with the invasion of Turco-Mongols. Nehru says that “the Mughals were outsiders and strangers to India and yet they fitted into the Indian structure with remarkable speed and began the Indo-Mughal period”.<sup>6</sup> This period ended with a growing tension between the Islamic faith and Hinduism.<sup>7</sup> Around 1750, the Marathas (Hindus) defeated the last Mughal emperor but their government was weak and their administration amateurish.<sup>8</sup> This gave the British an opportunity to consolidate their influence, and later dominion, over the country.

### 1.1. Protestant Missions

India was important to Britain initially as the centre of a web of British trading activity throughout Asia. From a naval perspective, it rapidly became vital in maintaining control of the Asian seas. Britain needed the raw materials from the region for its industry at the same time that a market for its products was secured. Alongside with the economic and strategic motives, although less significant, was the humanitarian objective, seen primarily in the anti-slavery imperative but also in the concern for local peoples’ rights and for the maintenance of missionary work.<sup>9</sup> However, there is no doubt that there was a link between the policy of colonialism and the missionary efforts directed towards the same regions of the world. Anglican chaplains were appointed to accompany the larger ships and some remained in India when trade-posts were established there. The founders of the British East India Company were very devout and decided that their trade would be characterised by more than just material thinking.<sup>10</sup> In

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<sup>6</sup> Nehru, Jawaharlal, *The Discovery of India*, 2003:241

<sup>7</sup> Nehru 2003:271

<sup>8</sup> Nehru 2003:279

<sup>9</sup> See discussion in Stanley, Bryan, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions & British Imperialism in the nineteenth & twentieth centuries*, 1990:42-48

<sup>10</sup> Neill 1984:364,365

spite of this positive attitude to the spiritual needs of British traders and soldiers, the Company “deliberately opposed missionaries coming to India for evangelising”.<sup>11</sup>

The first Protestant missionaries to arrive in India were the Germans Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Henry Plutschau in 1706, as part of the Danish Tranquebar Mission.<sup>12</sup> By the end of the eighteenth century, several other missions had sent missionaries to India. William Carey arrived in India in 1793 under the auspices of the newly formed the Baptist Missionary Society and in 1798 the London Missionary Society sent out Nathaniel Forsyth. The Church Missionary Society (CMS) reached Calcutta in 1815. During the same period other missions started their work in India: the Scottish Missionary Society, the American Board and the Netherlands Missionary Society.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the East India Company, based in London, had taken over the administration of India, although the sub-continent was divided in states ruled by independent princes.<sup>13</sup> However, dissatisfaction with foreign rulers arose as seen by the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. The mutiny started as a reaction against highly controversial measures taken by the British government, raising strong nationalistic passion.<sup>14</sup> It was not an anti-Christian movement so much as anti-British, but nevertheless had consequences for Christians living in the north of India, with some being persecuted; this was due to the fact that Christianity was seen as a foreign religion and identified with British administration.<sup>15</sup> Growing nationalistic sentiments laid the foundation for indigenous initiatives and also for the emergence of local leadership

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<sup>11</sup> David 2001:31

<sup>12</sup> Rathinasamy, E. J., ‘Indigenous Christian Origins in Central Tamil Nadu’ in Hedlund, Roger, ed., *Christianity is Indian – The Emergence of an Indigenous Community*, 2004:199,200; Neill 1985:45

<sup>13</sup> Rizvi, S.A.A., *The Wonder that was India*, part II, 2003:xxiii

<sup>14</sup> Spear 1961:259; Renick, M.S., *Christian Missionary Movement in Northern India*, 2004:91

<sup>15</sup> Firth 2003:188



within Christian churches. This development increasingly changed the relationship between the founding missions and their Indian congregations.

An important outcome of the mutiny was the collapse of the East India Company. From 1858 large areas of India came under direct rule from London and it was determined that the government should be neutral regarding religious orientation.<sup>16</sup> Religious tolerance and neutrality created conditions for the forthcoming democratic state and the establishment of voluntary associations in an Indian context.

## 1.2. Nationalistic Movements and Indian Churches

Closely related to the political developments in the country, the concept of an Indian-led Church was beginning to take shape in missionary thinking. The influence of Henry Venn, general secretary of CMS and his theory of the three-self formula contributed to this new mindset.<sup>17</sup> The South India regional missionary conference (CMS) in 1858 decided that vernacular language should be adopted in all preaching and that 'native agencies', meaning local churches, should be led by national people trained for that purpose.<sup>18</sup>

The problem of cultural adaptation caused by colonialism and imposition of a foreign power system, created an increasing desire also among Indian Protestants to develop a church that would be acceptable to nationals. This was not just a question of producing something that looked Indian; it required an entirely new approach regarding leadership,

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<sup>16</sup> Firth 2003:189; Padinjarekuttu 1995:60-62; Renick 2004:91

<sup>17</sup> See discussion Neill 1985:407-412

<sup>18</sup> Kuriakose, M.K., *History of Christianity in India: Source Materials*, 2003:170-175

ecclesiastical structures and involvement in society. The Church had to prove that it really was Indian and not an instrument of European imperial power. Many Indian Evangelical denominations have their roots in the nineteenth century, a critical period of mission history in India, as a result of the nationalisation process that occurred in churches established by missionaries and the emergence of national leadership.<sup>19</sup>

The mass conversions that took place in the mid nineteenth century contributed to the expansion of Evangelical churches, although, according to Julian Saldanha, they should be seen more as socio-religious movements than exclusively religious events.<sup>20</sup> Quoting D.B. Forrester, Saldanha agrees that it was “a kind of ‘group identity crisis’ in which the group affirms a new social and religious identity”.<sup>21</sup> Especially among the low castes, the Christian faith gave an opportunity for a sense of dignity and self-respect. The social assistance that accompanied the missionary work did, of course, also play a part in the whole process of attracting people to the churches.<sup>22</sup>

Mass conversions were often based on the decision of community and family leaders. This was possible due to a strong sense of group identity and the loyalty of members to the leadership. The advantage was that people did not lose their original sociological group but continued to live with their families and neighbours without the dramatic separation from the old as would have happened in other situations.<sup>23</sup> Usually community leadership continued to exercise its governance in local congregations,

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<sup>19</sup> See complete list of denominations in Padinjarekuttu 1995:460,461

<sup>20</sup> Saldanha, Julian, ‘Patterns of Conversion in Indian Mission History’, Mattam, J. and S. Kim (eds.), *Missions and Conversion – a Reappraisal*, 1996:80

<sup>21</sup> Saldanha 1996:82

<sup>22</sup> Firth 2003:200

<sup>23</sup> See discussion in Hrangkhuma, F. (ed.), ‘Factors that Contributed to the Arrest of Mass Movements Towards Christianity in India’, *Christianity in India – a Search for Liberation and Identity*, 1998:313 ff

creating a new pattern for church clergy and ensuring that nationalisation quickly came into effect within the churches.

Nominalism became a growing problem for national churches, partially as a result of mass conversions. As the 'church of the people' operating in a defined region, there was less emphasis on conversion than there had been previously.<sup>24</sup> Criticism has been directed against the practice of mass conversions by Christians and non-Christians alike because of the apparent link between offering relief and appealing for converts. Christians recognised that missionaries went to places where there was the greatest response, and that social action could have been interpreted by some people as a kind of bribe in return for conversion.<sup>25</sup> Naturally, the accused missionaries denied this intention, although they did accept they had acted unwisely on some occasions. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that entire tribes or castes became Christians, despite often being almost completely ignorant of what their new faith entailed.

In 1914 the National Missionary Council of India was formed changing its name to National Christian Council (NCC) in 1923. Originally, the Council admitted foreign organisations as members but since 1956 full membership has only been given to autochthonous churches. The NCC initiated various discussions and consultations on issues related to church and society, for example the study and ensuing report on the Christian Higher Education published in 1931. When the Indian Constitution was written, the NCC was influential in bringing about the inclusion of a clause guaranteeing the freedom "to profess, practise and propagate" religion.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Johnstone and Mandryk 2001:313

<sup>25</sup> Firth 2003:202,203

<sup>26</sup> Firth 2003:236

### 1.3. Indian Independence and Mahatma Gandhi

The Rowlatt Bills were strongly criticised by Mahatma Gandhi and seem to have been the starting point for his 'Passive Resistance'. The Rowlatt laws were initially introduced in 1898 as an amendment to the Indian Penal Code and gave the government power to punish and imprison people when any document, publication or public manifestation was considered to be agitation against the authorities.<sup>27</sup> The laws became also part of the Central Legislature in 1919 and Gandhi saw them as "unjust, subversive of the principles of liberty and justice".<sup>28</sup>

As a result of the strong reaction, Gandhi emerged as national leader for both Hindus and Muslims. He started the Non-Cooperation Movement and provided people with the slogan "Swaraj within a year" (Independence within a year).<sup>29</sup> The mission societies did not officially condemn the resulting violence and had difficulty coping with the developing nationalism led by Gandhi. The result was that people in areas affected by massacres associated Christianity with British and other foreign colonial powers. In addition, the desire for independence also influenced Indian Evangelicals and there began to be a move to disassociate from Western missionaries and indigenise the Christian faith. According to Mahatma Gandhi, "conversion means giving up one's own culture and religion and embracing something alien and foreign". For the greater part he was echoing the Hindu view of Christianity, namely as a foreign religion that led people to abandon local culture. Conversion was seen as an act of denationalisation.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Dharmaraj, Jacob S., *Colonialism and Christian Mission: Postcolonial Reflections*, 1999:128,129

<sup>28</sup> Dharmaraj 1999:129

<sup>29</sup> Swaraj means self-governance or "home-rule", from *swa* – "self" and *raj* – "rule". The word was used by Mahatma Gandhi as a concept of Indian independence from foreign dominion. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swaraj>, quoting Pare, Anthony, *Hind Swaraj and other writing of M.K. Gandhi* (Cambridge: University Press, 1997)

<sup>30</sup> Kanagarathinam, P., 'Conversion Motives', *India Church Growth Quarterly*, 1999:11; Kim, Sebastian, *In Search of Identity – Debates on Religious Conversion in India*, 2003:29

The response of Indian Christian theologians, such as A. J. Appasamy and P. Chenchiah, to the growing criticism regarding expatriates' influence within the churches was the sentiment that the Church in India should be missionary-minded and that the Christian community should develop an eclectic theology that was free from Western confessional teaching. This led to the formation of the Christian Book Club and the Christo Samaj (Christian Community), a counter-organization to Brahmo Samaj.<sup>31</sup>

The indigenising of the Church in India was carried out without the help of the European missionaries, but some individual Europeans and American missionaries, such as C.F. Andrews and E. Stanley Jones, became close friends of Gandhi and began to support Indian national movements.<sup>32</sup> Jones' influence upon the revision of Protestant mission theology cannot be underestimated. His contacts with Gandhi, together with a desire to make the gospel attractive to the Indian mind, made him search for a contextualised theology of the Kingdom of God.<sup>33</sup>

The unification of the Church of South India was extremely important for the development of the Church in India and the common struggle for independence within Christian churches. Dharmaraj evaluates the work of the foreign missionaries, recognising their effort to help people with basic education; at the same time that he criticises their association with colonial power.<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, in the early twentieth century, there was little evidence that the arguments in favour of contextualised churches were actually put into practice.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Dharmaraj 1999:132. Brahmo Samaj is a religious movement that has played significant role in the renaissance of India and for modern thinking in the country. Deminger, Sigfrid, *Evangelist på Indiska Villkor: Stanley Jones och den Indiska Renässansen* [Evangelist Under Indian Conditions: Stanley Jones and the Indian Renaissance], 1985: 37,38; [www.chanda.reeserve.co.uk/brahmoframe.htm](http://www.chanda.reeserve.co.uk/brahmoframe.htm)

<sup>32</sup> Dharmaraj 1999:134

<sup>33</sup> Deminger 1985:195;

<sup>34</sup> Dharmaraj 1999:137

<sup>35</sup> Dharmaraj 1999:140

Several influential missionary leaders evaluated in the 1960s the colonial connection in Protestant missions, calling for an end of paternalism.<sup>36</sup> Max Warren, former general secretary of the CMS “insisted that the contemporary (1964-65) nationalist revolution in Asia and Africa demanded an end to racially superior attitudes amongst Western missionaries and called for a sympathetic Christian response”.<sup>37</sup>

#### 1.4. Evangelical Churches in the Independent State

The percentage of Christians in the Indian population has remained static over the last fifty years.<sup>38</sup> This shows that although the Christian Church has grown numerically, it continues to be a minority religion in a country that is officially secular. Independent churches have seen the greatest expansion in recent years, as also verified in Brazil and Ghana, with an annual growth of 6.8% (2000).<sup>39</sup>

Humanitarian service and education have been important factors in the expansion of Evangelical churches. The contextualisation of the Gospel and new methods of evangelisation have also played a vital part in contributing to their growth. Particularly in rural areas, the Christian presence and message have been significant in giving tribal groups an ideological base.<sup>40</sup> When combined with working to bring relief and peace and providing education, the establishment of Christian congregations has served as a bridge between ethnic groups and lower castes, helping local communities to improve their organisational skills and strive for improvements to infrastructure. As seen already,

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<sup>36</sup> Stanley 1990:17,18

<sup>37</sup> Stanley 1990:18

<sup>38</sup> Rajan, S. Irudaya, ‘Demographic Profile of Indian Christians: An Overview’, *Indian Missiological Review*, 1989:122 (for statistics from 1951 to 1981); Johnstone 2001:310 (for 2000)

<sup>39</sup> Johnstone 2001:310. This should be compared to the annual growth of the total population of India of 1.66% and of other Christian groupings according to Johnstone’s division: Protestant 4.5%, Catholic 1.1% and Orthodox 1.2%

<sup>40</sup> Firth 2003:281

mass movements in some of these communities owe their success to this combination of evangelistic proclamation and social action.

### **1.5. Summary**

Both Portuguese and British colonisers had the establishment of lucrative commercial business as their priority. Other motives for introducing foreign legislation and practices (such as preaching the ‘Good News of Jesus Christ’, impeding the spread of the Islamic faith and helping the poor reach European educational and social standards) were undoubtedly important, but were in most cases overshadowed by political and economic interests. This significantly influenced the role and work of Christian chaplains as well as Catholic and Protestant missionaries.

The missionaries came across a culture that was, in many ways, more complex and elaborate than their own. Some appreciated the need for a deeper understanding of Indian society and dedicated most of their life to trying to learn native languages and decipher the worldview of Indian thinking. However, the majority failed to overcome the cultural barrier and therefore made no significant impact on the indigenous population.

Although the scholars of the Thomas tradition defend Christianity as being one of the first religions of India and therefore an integral part of Indian society, the models introduced by European and North American missionaries during the sixteenth to twentieth centuries were strongly influenced by their own ecclesiastical systems. As a result, they were frequently rejected by the indigenous population as being ‘foreign’.

The translation process of the Christian faith in India has consequently not been easy, partly because cross-cultural communication is in itself a big challenge, and partly because the missionaries struggled to understand the Indian worldview. The difficulty in assimilating Christian doctrines and practices and contextualising them within the Indian cultural framework has created suspicion towards Christianity and hindered stronger growth of Christian churches in the country.

The growth of churches in India has been similar to the developments in other parts of the global south, with evangelisation focusing on the poorer members of the population without impacting upon the rulers and opinion-makers within society. Mass conversions have contributed significantly to the growth of Christianity in India but also led to 'people-churches' in which second and third generation believers have not had the same commitment as the first converts. Later developments have led to a sizeable presence of Evangelical (mainly Charismatic and Independent) churches in the country, particularly from the time when nationals took over the leadership, and more contextualised forms have been adopted.

In addition to bringing the Christian faith to India, the missions contributed significantly to the development of the country through their educational programmes. The formation of an indigenous leadership with critical minds and the courage to initiate the nationalistic movement is largely due to the influence of Christian schools. The process of nationalism that took place in India from the nineteenth century onwards was extremely important in preparing the way for the mission movements that have emerged during the last four decades. It has led to a growing awareness of the need for contextualised churches specifically designed to expand into other regions of the sub-continent and possessing a national leadership sufficiently motivated to take these



initiatives. Recent political developments in the country have also demonstrated an increasing freedom to found voluntary associations, developing indigenous models.<sup>41</sup>

## 2. Voluntary Associations in Indian Society

Christian missions have established schools and hospitals, promoted community development and agricultural projects by volunteers. In most cases, these associations have been closely tied to mission and church structures. Considered from a positive perspective, this has introduced the concept of integral mission, combining evangelism and social action. From a more critical standpoint, it has also caused confusion and pressure to convert to Christianity. People have assumed that they must be members of the church in order to receive the benefits of social and educational institutions.

Since independence, democratic values have ensured the freedom for such organisations to be founded. As religious institutions have not been affiliated to the state, it has been possible for them to establish voluntary associations. Examples from the Hindu faith include the Brahmo Samaj movement. Mission societies have emerged throughout the different Christian denominations. There are many such associations within the Roman Catholic Church and, as discussed below, also among the Evangelical churches. Mission-based organisations also exist within the Orthodox Church, for example the Missionary Society of St. Thomas the Apostle, founded in 1968.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> This is particularly seen in the fast growing number of NGOs in India, as mentioned in the next section

<sup>42</sup> Vadakel, Sebastian, 'The Missionary Society of St. Thomas the Apostle: its Beginnings', *Indian Missiological Review*, 1998:28

Not all voluntary associations are faith-based. Some are politically motivated as seen in the great variety of parties that exist today. The oldest, the Indian National Congress (INC), was established in 1885 as a pro-British Indian organisation, but later became the main voice speaking out in favour of India's freedom. A growing number of humanitarian NGOs have also been established in India dealing with issues such as development, water, education, health, agriculture, environment, natural resources, micro-finance, population, disability, housing and emergency relief.<sup>43</sup> Most receive financial support from North America and Europe but are led by Indian nationals.

Under the terms of the Indian Constitution there is complete freedom to establish voluntary associations. Consequently, it is impossible to calculate how many exist in the country, particularly if, in addition to religious, political, humanitarian groups, one includes recreational groups for sports, arts, music, culture, etc.

Despite the National Christian Council's involvement and influence in drawing up the Indian Constitution, political involvement has not been the forte of Evangelical churches in India. Traditionally, the tendency has been for silence and non-participation in political debate. The voluntary associations formed by Christian churches and related organisations have dealt almost exclusively with education and social relief work without challenging the political and economic structures contributing to poverty and marginalisation. Historically, there were two main reasons for this, apart from Roman Catholics and Evangelicals being minority groups. These were the policy of political neutrality inherited from foreign mission organisations, and the theology of separation from worldly matters, focusing almost exclusively on a future heaven. Certainly this

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<sup>43</sup> NGOsIndia, an online NGO web directory and resource centre of Indian NGOs, [www.ngosindia.com](http://www.ngosindia.com)

attitude towards politics favoured the missionising work in many places, particularly where Hindu authorities were antagonistic to Christian activities.

In recent years, however, there has been a change of opinion regarding Christian involvement in political issues. For example, the Indian Mission Association (IMA) devoted an issue of its magazine *Indian Missions* to the theme of 'Politics and Christians', encouraging Evangelical believers to participate in the national political scene and advocating that Christians assume their responsibility for civil society.<sup>44</sup> Manokaran affirms that "politics are definitely an important aspect of a Christian's life" and that "Christians have no right to criticise the government in which they do not want to be involved".<sup>45</sup>

Questioning how much the Christian Church is impacting society in general in India, Joseph D'Souza, Director of Operation Mobilisation in India, says that

The Church has been a bystander, seen as on the periphery of Indian society rather than an integral part... There has not been a sustained Indian expression of the reality of Jesus at the practical level during the last fifty years.<sup>46</sup>

However, in a leaflet on interfaith dialogue published by the Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI), the holistic aspect of the Christian message is strongly emphasised as the best way of building bridges amongst the local culture and people of other religious confessions. The appreciation shown, particularly by Hindus, towards Christian groups and NGOs working amongst the marginalised (for example in the fields of health and education) is fitting recognition of the vital role played by such voluntary associations,

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<sup>44</sup> *Indian Missions*, October-December, 2002

<sup>45</sup> Manokaran, J.N., 'Should Christians be Engaged in Politics?', in *Indian Missions*, 2002:16

<sup>46</sup> Quoted by Rajendran 1998:139

despite the rather frequent conflicts between these Christians and Hindus. EFI recommends, therefore, that Christian churches act more decisively, creating opportunities and structures for holistic ministry.<sup>47</sup>

### **3. Emergence of Evangelical Mission Movements**

As seen in the historical review, several of the factors that contribute to the emergence of mission movements are clearly present in the development of ecclesiastical structures in India. Particularly after the independence process, nationalistic trends and a vision for reaching out to the whole sub-continent have nourished mission strategies, encouraged entrepreneurial leadership in local congregations and inspired to form voluntary associations with evangelistic and social objectives. The political scene has favoured this religious and co-operative freedom at the same time as laws and cultural sensitivities have changed the role of foreign missionaries and the attitude towards mother missions from abroad.

The emergence of mission movements in India correlates to main periods of Christian expansion occurring within the country. K.P. Pothen identifies three significant periods during which conversion to Christianity took place: firstly, the time when the earliest believers (for example the Syrian Christians of Kerala) became Christians; secondly, the early nineteenth century when mass conversions to the Christian faith occurred. Finally, the latter part of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries has been

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<sup>47</sup> Evangelical Fellowship of India, *Statement of Perceptions of Christianity by People of Other Faiths and Our Response*, leaflet published in December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2002

marked by an increase in the number of individuals converting to Christianity, as a result of personal conviction.<sup>48</sup>

### 3.1. The Beginning of Mission Movements

The Mar Thoma Syrian Evangelistic Association was the first mission organisation to originate in India. As the missionary division of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, the association was formed in 1888.<sup>49</sup> The Mar Thoma Church is the reformed branch of the Syrian Orthodox Church and claims to have been brought to India by the Apostle Thomas in the first century of the Christian era A.D.<sup>50</sup>

The Indian Missionary Society of Tirunelveli was founded in 1903, under the leadership of Bishop V.S. Azariah, and the Anglican Church. In 1905 the National Missionary Society (Bharat Christya Sevak Samaj) was also formed by Bishop Azariah together with other national leaders and some ex-patriates.<sup>51</sup> According to Firth, the National Missionary Society was to be

...an inter-denominational society, supported by Indian money, manned by Indians, though it would not refuse offers of help from other countries, and committed as far as possible to follow indigenous methods. Its objects were defined as "to evangelise un-evangelised areas in India and adjacent countries and to stimulate missionary zeal in the churches."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Pothen, K.P., 'Changing Society' in Hrangkhuma, F. and Sebastian C.H. Lim (eds.), *The Church in India: Its Mission Tomorrow*, 1999:4

<sup>49</sup> Jeyasingh, J.M., 'Indigenous Missionary Movements – A Critical Study' in Hedlund, Roger, ed., *Christianity is Indian – The Emergence of an Indigenous Community*, 2004:217

<sup>50</sup> Jayaprakash, L. Joshi, *Evaluation of Indigenous Missions of India*, 1987:1

<sup>51</sup> Williams, Theodore, 'Indian Missions', in *Indigenous Missions of India*, 1980:2; Jeyasingh 2004:219

<sup>52</sup> Firth 2003:254

For many years these two organisations had sole responsibility for cross-cultural mission and alongside the Mar Thoma Church, were the only indigenous mission structures in the Indian sub-continent.

The missionary initiatives in the Indian Church were among the first in the Global South. However, following these initiatives in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was a hiatus in missionary activity. According to Theodore Williams, “spiritual lethargy, nominalism and the influence of liberal theology caused stagnation and killed the evangelistic and missionary zeal among the Christian churches in India”.<sup>53</sup> It was only in the 1950s that interest in mission was revived again with the formation of the Evangelical Fellowship of India (1951) and its missionary division, the Evangelical Overseas Mission, founded in 1954 and later renamed the Indian Evangelical Mission. The 1950s also saw other indigenous missionary movements emerge mostly in South India. The largest was the Friends Missionary Prayer Band, which started in 1958 through ‘vacation bible schools’ where students formed prayer bands for mission.<sup>54</sup> Among the denominations, several churches were engaged in sending cross-cultural missionaries; these included the Church of South India and the Church of North India, The Methodist Church, the Mizo Presbyterian Church, the Mizo Baptist Church and the Naga Baptist Churches.<sup>55</sup>

### **3.2. New Wave of Mission Movements**

It was in the 1970s and 1980s that real growth in Indian mission movements began. The political changes in the 1960s, with the possibility of visa restrictions preventing foreign

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<sup>53</sup> Williams 1980:2,3

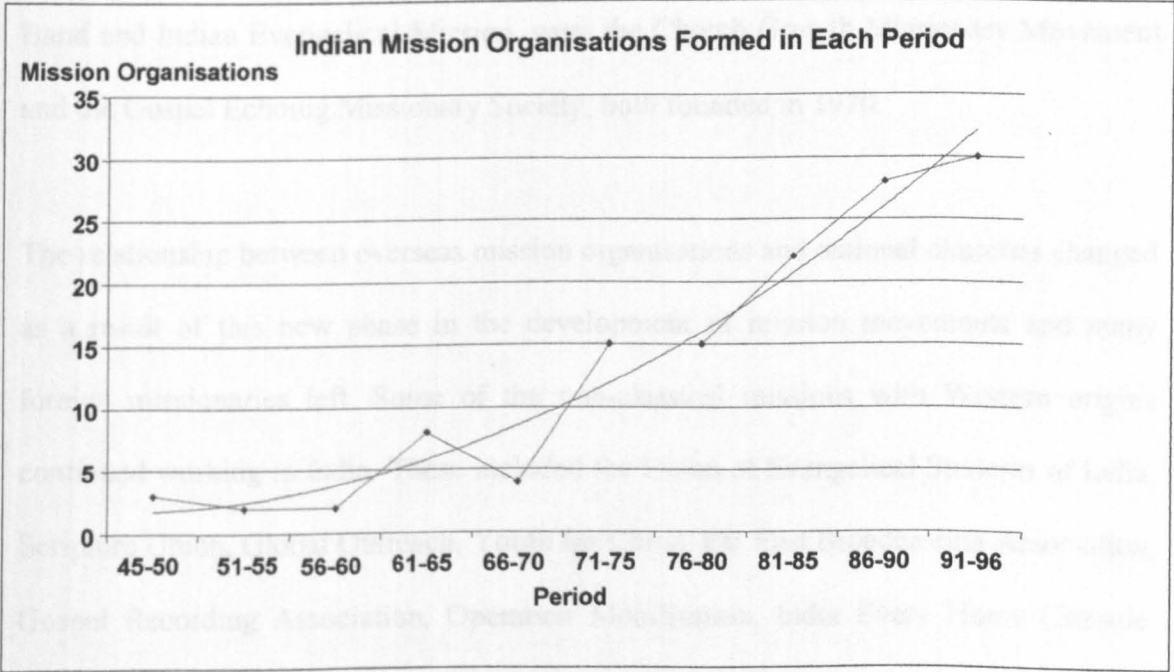
<sup>54</sup> Jeyasingh 2004:221

<sup>55</sup> Williams 1980:3,4

missionaries from being able to enter India at all, led to a new awareness among Indian churches of the need for nationals to take responsibility for the country’s missionary work.<sup>56</sup> Sam Lazarus says that those two decades saw “an unprecedented growth in the area of mission work and cross-cultural evangelism resulting in ‘mushrooming of Missions’”.<sup>57</sup>

Graph 7 shows the development of mission organisations affiliated to IMA from the 1950s onwards, demonstrating the new wave of mission and the significant increase that occurred in the 1970s and 1980s.

**Graph 7: Number of Indian Mission Organisations established over 5-year periods, from 1945 to 1996**



<sup>56</sup> The moratorium was due to governmental restrictions for missionaries to get working visas in the country, owing to accusations of proselytism through social work. See further discussion in 5.2.3 of this chapter

<sup>57</sup> Quoted by Rajendran, K., *Which Way Forward Indian Missions?*, 1998:55

According to K. Rajendran, this new wave of mission movements in India started because

- Churches that have been planted had a new consciousness about the missionary task;
- The foreign missionaries had left; and,
- The Christians grew from seeing just the local work and looking at a broader field, with the aim to reach other places in the Indian sub-continent.<sup>58</sup>

The Pentecostal-Charismatic mission agencies emerged predominantly during this period, with twenty-one being established in the 1970s and another twenty-four in the 1980s. In 1988 there were 3,661 missionaries working with these agencies.<sup>59</sup> It was also a time when inter-denominational and indigenous 'faith agencies' came into existence. Some of the best known, apart from the already mentioned Friends Missionary Prayer Band and Indian Evangelical Mission, were the Church Growth Missionary Movement and the Gospel Echoing Missionary Society, both founded in 1970.

The relationship between overseas mission organisations and national churches changed as a result of this new phase in the development of mission movements and many foreign missionaries left. Some of the non-classical missions with Western origins continued working in India. These included the Union of Evangelical Students of India, Scripture Union, Global Outreach, Youth for Christ, Far East Broadcasting Association, Gospel Recording Association, Operation Mobilisation, India Every Home Crusade, Youth with a Mission, and Every Creature Crusade.<sup>60</sup> With nationals taking over responsibility for the administration of the mission movements, the role of the few

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<sup>58</sup> Rajendran, K., Interview, February 2002

<sup>59</sup> Rajendran 1998:56

<sup>60</sup> Rajendran 1998:56



remaining foreign missionaries changed and they were seen more as coaches, teachers, colleagues and facilitators.

It was at the 1977 All India Congress on Mission and Evangelisation of The Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI) (Devali, Maharashtra), that IMA was founded under the leadership of Theodore Williams, following a strong call to bring the emerging indigenous missionary organisations under a national network for mutual help, co-operation and corporate expression.<sup>61</sup> By 1998, IMA had 102 affiliated members. In 2005 the membership had increased to 200, representing almost 50% of the 440 known mission organisations in India.

### **3.3. Characteristics of Indian Mission Movements**

The almost exponential growth of mission movements in India is also seen in the number of missionaries sent out by different types of organisations. 99% of missionaries are working cross-culturally amongst ethnic groups within the country.<sup>62</sup> Of the affiliated members to IMA, only 5% have missionaries placed abroad. Most missionaries working outside India are tent-making since raising support presents a challenge, particularly for sending churches with small congregations. The connection with diasporic groups in other countries has proved to be an effective way of raising support for overseas workers and also a 'mission field' by itself since the majority of the Indian diaspora is not Christian. In places where it is forbidden to work openly as a missionary (for example Muslim countries), many Indians work in local businesses and homes, sharing their faith through personal contacts. Inter-denominational mission

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<sup>61</sup> Rajendran 1998:84

<sup>62</sup> Johnstone and Mandryk 2001:311

organisations consider a wide range of countries to be their mission fields including Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, China, Bhutan, Myanmar, Cambodia, Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand, the Middle East, Sudan and the United Kingdom.<sup>63</sup> The denominational mission structures seem to give more emphasis to the establishment of churches among diasporic groups in Europe and North America.

Indian mission movements tend to focus largely on reaching those from within their own geographic and ethnic context. It is a similar approach to that adopted by mission organisations in Ghana. Although most missionaries would describe themselves as ‘cross-cultural’ because they reach beyond their own cultural background, their primary task is to plant churches in their home country. The diversity of ethnic, social and religious groupings certainly gives credence to the use of a missiological terminology that embraces the cross-cultural aspects of the work. Indeed, the application of such terminology for evangelistic efforts has contributed to some extent to the rapid increase in the number of Indian missionaries during the late 1980s and 1990s (demonstrated in Graph 8). It has also led to a change in understanding of the title ‘missionary’, a term traditionally used only to describe those who came from abroad and thus associated with ‘white’ people.

As shown in Graph 8, the growth of mission movements is very much a story of success, with India sending out more missionaries than any country apart from the United States.<sup>64</sup> In addition to the missionaries officially recorded by mission organisations, there are also thousands of lay people establishing churches and being

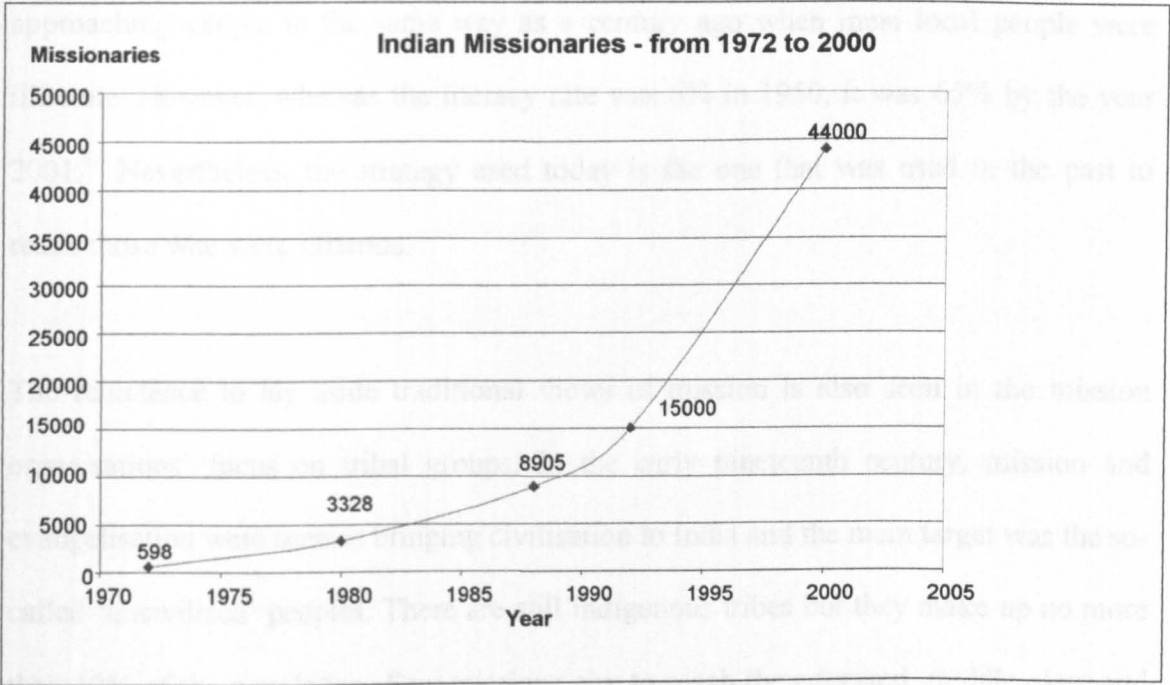
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<sup>63</sup> Indian Mission Association, *Directory of IMA Member Missions*, 2000

<sup>64</sup> When including all cross-cultural missionaries sent both within and outside the country

involved in mission in India without any formal recognition from churches or missions. This is also true, of course, for other countries, including both OSCs and NSCs.

**Graph 8: Number of Indian missionaries from 1972 to 2000<sup>65</sup>**



Despite the positive statistics regarding the expansion of mission movements in India, such development has given rise to concern. Most mission movements in India are less than thirty years old and continue to face the challenge of finding suitable structures for the Indian context, particularly in relation to financial matters. In many cases, mission organisations tend to replicate models that were originally brought to India from elsewhere, including the establishment of mission compounds, educational institutions, health projects and orphanages. Mission leaders frequently take the view that a ‘real’ mission should offer the same service to local communities as those that came from

<sup>65</sup> The statistics are from: Ref. 1972, 1980 and 1988 from Pate, Larry, *From Every People* (1989); Ref. 1993 from Johnstone 2003; Ref. 2000 from Johnstone and Mandryk 2001

abroad in the past. Therefore, relief work and community development are often part of the strategy.

This thought-process can lead to the application of an old methodology, with missions approaching people in the same way as a century ago when most local people were illiterate. However, whereas the literacy rate was 6% in 1950, it was 65% by the year 2001.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, the strategy used today is the one that was used in the past to reach those who were illiterate.

The reluctance to lay aside traditional views of mission is also seen in the mission organisations' focus on tribal groups. In the early nineteenth century, mission and evangelisation were seen as bringing civilisation to India and the main target was the so-called 'uncivilised' peoples. There are still indigenous tribes but they make up no more than 10% of the population. Few missions aim to reach the educated, middle class and the rich, preferring to work primarily among marginalised groups. One reason for this approach is that the majority of missionaries still come from poorer classes and never reach higher social castes. The other explanation is that working classes are more receptive, particularly in rural areas and among migrants in urban slums who are classed as Dalits, the outcasts or 'untouchables' in the Hindu caste system. Being oppressed and marginalised in society, without any hope of changing to a higher caste, Dalits find in Christian churches a new identity and possibility of being accepted as equals.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> According to the official census of 2001 ( [mapsofindia.com/census2001/literacyrate.htm](http://mapsofindia.com/census2001/literacyrate.htm))

<sup>67</sup> The discussion on the Indian caste system is complex but important to understand the growth of newer independent churches in the country. For further discussion and definitions see D'Souza, Joseph, *Dalit Freedom – Now and Forever*, 2004:23-28

The most critical issue, however, is the fact that, for many Indians, the Christian faith is seen as a foreign religion. The old criticism regarding the failure to contextualise or indigenise the Christian faith is still a relevant concern. Christians have created a sub-culture that tends to repeatedly emulate the same imported models. One example is the building of churches that replicate church buildings in the UK. One wonders how church architecture would differ if the Christian faith had been brought to India by Asians or Africans?

Funding is a major challenge for mission movements and is often mentioned by leaders as the main stumbling block towards further growth and development. Finding creative ways of resourcing projects and developing partnerships with foreign organisations are common ways of dealing with the lack of finances. For example, missionaries working within India are funded 30% by national churches and 70% by Indian diaspora churches and international organisations from other countries.<sup>68</sup> It is not uncommon to see the statement “for the price of one ex-patriate missionary, ten national workers can be supported” in Indian missions’ publicity for international partners.<sup>69</sup> Or, that thirty to fifty US dollars per month is enough to keep a national missionary on the mission field.

Money coming from Indian ex-patriates is seen as part of the national resources and not as something coming from Western sources. Some mission organisations use the establishment of work among diasporic groups as a strategy to access funds that would not be available in the country. John Amalraj sees, however, the danger of exploring the

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<sup>68</sup> Estimation by K. Rajendran, Interview June 2007

<sup>69</sup> This propaganda is also used by some international mission organisations as a strategy to raise funds for ‘national workers’ in India and other poorer countries. Joseph D’Souza, OM leader in India and Asia, criticises this propaganda – see article ‘The Scandal of ‘Cheap Native Missionary’ in [www.om.org/relay/stories/1-97CheapMiss.html](http://www.om.org/relay/stories/1-97CheapMiss.html)

diaspora only as a source for financial help. He affirms that there is still need for sending mission workers to the diasporic community in other countries, but also that

The main purpose of this should not be focus on raising funds for missions back home, which is a diversion, but to envision and equip the Christian Diaspora to fulfil their calling in their adopted countries.<sup>70</sup>

The strong dependence on resources from abroad reinforces the perception of Christianity as a foreign religion, says Chiranjeevi. Arguing in favour of national funds, he questions the continuation of receiving funds from outside, saying that

Unfortunately, evangelism and church planting could not become self-supportive. It continued to remain in receiving foreign funds. Christianity is considered to be a foreign religion because even Christian workers take 100% help from outside. Since foreign missions have become Indian missions, why not Indian missions run with Indian funds?<sup>71</sup>

Alternative ways of financing Indian missions are proposed by Amalraj for example the suggestion to “start institutions that can be self sufficient in funding but also become income generating projects for other activities”.<sup>72</sup> The idea of using different forms of business as a valid source for missionary work is not new but has increasingly been discussed among Indian mission organisations. The magazine of IMA, *Indian Missions*, calls ‘business’ the ‘new horizon in mission’, advocating for more and better use of entrepreneurial initiatives in order to provide the needed resources.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Amalraj, John, ‘Where are the Indian Missions in Relating and Influencing the Indian Diaspora to Across the World?’, *Indian Missions*, October-December 2008:30

<sup>71</sup> Chiranjeevi, Kamala, ‘The Funding Paradigms and Challenges: Possible Solutions for Missionaries and Missions’, *Indian Missions*, July-September 2008:12

<sup>72</sup> Amalraj, John, ‘Money is Not Just Dollars! Mobilizing Indian and other Donors for Mission Movement Forward’, *Indian Missions*, July-September 2008:18

<sup>73</sup> India Mission Association, *Indian Missions* (January-March 2007)

One concern of IMA, recognising that many mission organisations struggle with finances, is that there is great need for better member care, including better salaries, health insurance, education for children and ongoing training. A related concern is that the number of mission movements has increased rapidly in recent years without suitable structures for member care and support being in place. Second-generation missionaries frequently find the terms and conditions offered unacceptable and often leave the mission field after a few months of work. Some leaders feel that this new generation of missionaries is not suitably prepared for the task in the same way as the pioneers were, particularly if they feel obliged to continue the ministry of their parents rather than having the necessary vocation.

The training of missionaries in India, according to Rajendran, is generic and country-wide, rather than related to specific problems and challenges. Its impact on society is therefore weak and, at best, has a positive impact upon individuals and local communities. A culture of 'holiness' encourages Christians to isolate themselves from the 'world', avoiding public places, and refraining from participation in politics or transformational endeavours within their society.<sup>74</sup>

Mission movements are strongly concentrated in the South of India where traditionally Christianity has its strongest roots. About 70% have originated in the South, 20% in the North and 10% in the Northeast. However, new organisations are increasingly being founded in the Northeast owing to the encouragement of IMA and the growth of Evangelical churches in the region. Strong church planting movements have also

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<sup>74</sup> Rajendran, personal interview, February 2002

emerged in the North of India, producing grass-roots movements of evangelisation and outreach.<sup>75</sup>

Anti-conversion laws have been promulgated in several of the Indian states. One example is the Orissa Freedom of Religion Act from 1967 that, in principle, gives freedom of religion but does not allow any kind of inducement or pressure on people to change religion.<sup>76</sup> Based on the Act, local authorities have arrested Christians, accusing them to use illegal means to convert people. There have been strong reactions from Christians in various parts of the country, based on the understanding that the Act not only regulates the way conversion is done but in reality prohibits conversion in general. In May 2008, five Indian states were reported to have adopted the Anti-conversion laws: Gujarat, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Himachal Pradesh.<sup>77</sup> According to the All India Christian Council,

These laws, however, actually serve to infringe upon religious freedom and contradict rights protected within international agreements and the Indian Constitution. Such laws are motivated by a religious ideology driven by an irrational and insecure Hindu xenophobia that is antagonistic to religious minorities.<sup>78</sup>

The tension is certainly amplified by political and economic interests alongside tribal ethnocentrism. Recent conflicts between Hindus and Christians, such as in the state of Orissa, are partly to do with the aggressive church planting strategies employed by some

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<sup>75</sup> The majority of the mission organisations that were interviewed during field studies in India focus on 'unreached' groups in the Northeast and the North of the country. Mission movements in Nagaland are also growing fast based on a population that is increasingly Christian

<sup>76</sup> Kim 2003:76-78. For the complete text of the Act, see Kim 2003:207,208; Kuriakose 2003:426,427

<sup>77</sup> Conservapedia, [www.conservapedia.com/Anti-conversion\\_legislation\\_in\\_India](http://www.conservapedia.com/Anti-conversion_legislation_in_India), January 2011

<sup>78</sup> All India Christian Council, [indianchristians.in/news/content/view/896/43](http://indianchristians.in/news/content/view/896/43), January 2007



of the Evangelical mission movements. Persecution of Christian workers has been reported in many villages in several of the Indian states.<sup>79</sup>

#### **4. Case Studies of Mission Movements**

Four mission organisations are described in more detail, representing different models of mission structures in India, as in the chapters on Brazil and Ghana. The description is based on the information provided by the organisations and very much denotes how they perceive themselves. The four mission movements represent a microcosm of Evangelical missions in India.

- The first is a mainstream church, the Church of South India, the largest Evangelical denomination in the country, originating from the merger of three Churches founded by foreign missionaries.
- The second is an international inter-denominational mission, Operation Mobilisation, which has been the most influential agency in promoting cross-cultural mission in the country and training mission leaders.
- The third is one of the newer ‘faith missions’, the National Fellowship, typifying the trend towards non-denominational initiatives, focusing on ethnic groups in the country.

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<sup>79</sup> The Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI) – ([www.efionline.org](http://www.efionline.org)) reports regularly on the religious situation in the country and sends out weekly “persecution reports”

- The fourth is a Pentecostal missionary church structure, the India Pentecostal Church of God, which has grown to be the largest Pentecostal movement in India that was started by nationals.

The four missions are described in terms of their origin, founding leadership, main objectives, strategies, basic developments, governance and finances, based on the information collected through the field studies, official documents provided by the missions, interviews with leaders and other data available on their websites and in their newsletters.

#### **4.1. Church of South India**

In 1947 the Church of South India (CSI) was formed in a unique union of three Churches: the South India United Church (SIUC), the Methodists and the Anglicans. The new Church had about “1,010,000 members of whom 500,000 were Anglicans, some 220,000 Methodists and 290,000 from the SIUC”.<sup>80</sup> The official documentation of the CSI states that “the primary purpose of the formation of the CSI was not from strategy or fear of different ‘brands’ of Christianity existing in South India then, but from an inner urge and conviction that it is in the will of God such a union should take place”.<sup>81</sup> There was great anticipation that the establishment of the CSI would lead to the reunion of all Christian churches in India; however this hope was never fulfilled.

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<sup>80</sup> George, K.M., *Church of South India – Life in Union (1947-1997)*, 1999:5

<sup>81</sup> George 1999:9

From the start, the Church of South India stated its focus on evangelism and mission, with missionaries already active in Papua New Guinea at the time of the inauguration of the CSI. The Constitution of the CSI says

Therefore the Church of South India purposes ever to be mindful of its missionary calling, and prays that it may not only be greatly used of God for evangelisation of South India but may also take its due share in the preaching of the Gospel and the building up of Christ's Church in other parts of the world.<sup>82</sup>

A Board of Missions was formed in 1948 and in 1964 the functions of the board were revised and expanded. New initiatives were taken with the formation of the Board of Missions, and Thailand became CSI's second foreign mission field in 1958. However, the main focus in local congregations and most dioceses has been to evangelise immediate neighbourhoods. This strategy has been centred around the use of bible correspondence courses, the establishment of new congregations, the engagement of lay people in evangelism, and the use of drama and of classical music to attract people.<sup>83</sup>

Through the work of the Synod Board of Missions and Evangelism, an awareness of the need for holistic mission has more recently developed among leaders of the CSI and evangelisation has been defined as more than proselytisation and conversion, as was the initial intention when the Church was founded. Evangelisation is understood as "making life available in all its fullness to all people of God as well as the entire creation. Thus the mission mandate of the CSI is a comprehensive blue print to concretise the love of God in Jesus Christ".<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Quoted by George 1999:185

<sup>83</sup> George 1999:192,193

<sup>84</sup> Quoted by George 1999:191

Among the positive results that the CSI has achieved since its formation, according to its official historian K. M. George, are the following:

- Bible-centred life and worship, with translation, distribution and education of the scriptures;
- Proclamation of the Gospel;
- Liberation of the caste-ridden and oppressed communities of India and caring ministries for the sick, handicapped, illiterate and marginalised women;
- Church polity based on democratic principles; and,
- Ecumenism and church unity.<sup>85</sup>

Although evangelism has been an area of concern for the CSI the level of performance and achievement has varied between dioceses. In general, the laity has not been trained or used in mission as was intended from the beginning and church growth has been very dependent on the vision of local clergy.<sup>86</sup> A positive development, however, is the growing 'Indian-ness' of the CSI with all positions of responsibility within the denominational structure being held by national leaders.<sup>87</sup> There is, however, criticism of the lack of reform and of failure to develop an Indian theology within the CSI. George expresses the view that

Our thinking and our theology still remain foreign. Our bishops and presbyters trained in theological colleges patterned on western models and norms tend to become followers of western categories and conceptual framework of theology; many of them are incapable or are not able to interpret the cosmic Christ.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> George 1999:232

<sup>86</sup> George 1999:234

<sup>87</sup> George 1999:253

<sup>88</sup> George 1999:254

It is particularly the formation of ecclesiastic leadership in theological institutions that is the target of this criticism. According to George, “the Synod in consultation with Principals of Theological colleges should reform the curriculum, methods and textbooks of theological educations”.<sup>89</sup>

CSI historically has one diocese in northern Sri Lanka, and dioceses in Canada, the United States of America and the UK among the Indian diaspora.<sup>90</sup> The missionary activity of the CSI is very much linked to the expansion of dioceses in India and in countries where a considerable number of Indian emigrants have settled. Once again, the key element of the diaspora is seen in the development of mission movements in India and certainly more explored by the denominational structures than the inter-denominational agencies; these do not have the same natural links to churches among Indians who have immigrated to other countries.

#### **4.2. Operation Mobilisation India<sup>91</sup>**

Operation Mobilisation (OM) of India exemplifies the international inter-denominational mission movements that have influenced the development of cross-cultural mission in the country over the last thirty years. OM was established in India in 1964 with a small team (predominantly made up of young people from North America) working in the North. Indian national Thomas Samuel, who had been involved in OM since the previous year, became the leader of the Indian branch. Indian nationals were

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<sup>89</sup> George 1999:254

<sup>90</sup> Information from the official website of the Church of South India – [www.csichurch.com](http://www.csichurch.com)

<sup>91</sup> The information is based on India Missions Association, *Directory of IMA Member Missions*, 2000:118, the official website of OM India – [www.usa.om.org/omindia/](http://www.usa.om.org/omindia/) and interviews with Dr K. Rajendran, Executive Director of Indian Mission Association, in February 2002, March 2004 and June 2007

quickly recruited as members of OM, mostly from the south of the country where the majority of Christian churches were located. Also in 1964, a centre was founded in Mumbai to coordinate the mission initiatives and train short-term missionaries.

There were few indigenous missions at the time. An early OM partner was the House of Worship started by Bakhtsingh, a Punjabi convert originally living in Canada but who subsequently returned to India as an evangelist. Using the strategy of recruiting young people to work in teams, OM soon had groups operating throughout the North and the South. Soon Indian teams were also being formed to reach out to Europe and the Middle East.

The objectives of OM India were

- To present the gospel through literature distribution, mass media and personal evangelism;
- To form worshipping groups among the least evangelised people;
- Training national workers to strengthen Indian Church; and,
- To improve the quality of life of the urban poor.

In 1968 Friends Missionary Prayer Band was set up by leaders recruited and trained by OM. The Indian Evangelical Mission was also led by people trained at the OM centre. In the 1970s other mission movements were formed, many of them also by former OM missionaries. Members of OM India have been involved in international missions such as Campus Crusade for Christ, International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES), Youth with a Mission (YWAM) and Christian Literature Crusade (CLC).

In the initial phase of OM India's development, no formal training was required. However, there was a strong emphasis on discipleship, including spending time alone with God, bible study, group devotions and attending weekly prayer meetings. Practical ministry in India and beyond was an important part of the training. Later a more detailed curriculum was developed for biblical studies, becoming a model for missionary training. Under the leadership of K. Rajendran a training programme was established for all OM workers around the globe based on a two years curriculum of biblical and cultural studies.

OM uses the team-model for its governance and has a flat leadership structure with delegation of responsibilities to a group of people. With clearly defined functions, ministries in India are led primarily by nationals. The international character of the mission leads sometimes to exchange of personnel between the different OM bases around the world. In the year 2000, over 700 missionaries were involved in evangelism, training and literature ministries as part of OM India. From being a mission focussing almost exclusively on the proclamation of the Gospel, OM has adopted a more holistic approach in later years. New areas of service have been added to earlier ministries, such as relief and rehabilitation, Dalit education and a variety of other social projects. The total number of cross-cultural workers was in 2007 over 1,200, coming from most of the states in India and representing different social classes in society.

Both short and long-term missionaries are expected to raise their own financial support. This is done through local churches, friends and part-time works. OM India has international partners that provide some funds necessary for the development of different ministry projects and for additional support to missionaries. The concept of 'community' used by OM internationally is also applied in the Indian case with

members of a team receiving the same amount of personal support regardless of what funds are deposited in their OM bank account. In later years, a strong emphasis has been placed upon the value of Indian national workers arguing that they are more sensitive to the caste system and religious diversity than foreign nationals. They can also adapt more easily to local culture and therefore may develop significant relationships more quickly. The use of national mission workers encourages the participation of national churches and enables new leaders to emerge. It is clear that difficulties faced by foreign mission workers in obtaining visas to enter India has also played an important role in promoting this strategy.

OM India has been instrumental not only in sending teams of nationals to evangelise different parts of the country and beyond but also in establishing a mission leadership in the country. This entrepreneurial leadership was strongly encouraged by OM leaders in India in line with their vision for missionary work. A significant number of mission organisations in India founded from the 1970s onwards were initiated or are led by former OM personnel.

#### **4.3. National Fellowship<sup>92</sup>**

The mission organisation National Fellowship is typical of inter-denominational mission movements in India today. It was started in 1989 through the personal initiative of the Indian pastor Susanta Patra in response to the needs of groups in northern India both in terms of evangelism and social action.

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<sup>92</sup> The information is based on historic written material presented by the National Fellowship and interviews with the leadership of the mission: Susanta Patra, Sachixanta Mondal and Robendranath Saskan in March 2004



The vision of National Fellowship is defined as

Primarily to present the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit with cultural relevance and sensitivity among the unreached people groups in Northern India and thereby plant churches among them and create a church planting movement in each one of them.<sup>93</sup>

Although National Fellowship's initial projects were amongst the poor in the slums of Calcutta, and also amongst members of the middle class in the city, it was not long before its first missionaries were sent to the North. Today the mission has around 300 full-time missionaries working among unreached ethnic groups in central and northern states of India as well as in Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. Another 300 missionaries linked to National Fellowship are sent out in teams by local congregations or are working as 'tent-makers', raising their own support through a profession. These missionaries are primarily involved in evangelism, church planting, training of local church leaders and social projects.

The agency is led by a board of seven members along with a leadership team comprising the executive director and the regional directors representing the eight different geographical areas of work. The central office in Calcutta has five staff members and is based in a small apartment in the outskirts of the city.

The success of the mission is measured according to three categories: spiritual growth, related to the development of leadership skills and spiritual maturity of the missionaries; numerical growth, in relation to the number of converts and of churches; and

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<sup>93</sup> Historic presentation of National Fellowship 2004:3

geographical growth, describing the expansion to new states and to neighbouring countries.

National Fellowship is a 'faith mission' that depends exclusively on donations from Indian churches and private donors. For some social projects and specific programmes of evangelism contributions are made by partner organisations in other countries. According to the Executive Director, the mission is people-centred and there is no investment in buildings. The local communities that emerge as a result of the work of the missionaries can decide whether they want to acquire a building for their activities or to meet in homes.

Visiting some of the churches planted in the Calcutta area and meeting several of the missionaries linked to National Fellowship, it was not difficult to confirm the clear priority given on proclamation of the Gospel and the appeal for conversion to the Christian faith. Nonetheless, social work is part of the ministries and the new-born churches are engaged in providing homes for orphans and literacy programmes using community facilities.

#### **4.4. Indian Pentecostal Church of God<sup>94</sup>**

The Indian Pentecostal Church of God (IPC) is the second largest Pentecostal movement in India today with around 750,000 members. It is an indigenous movement established in 1924 with roots in the state of Kerala.<sup>95</sup> Indeed, several pre-Pentecostal revivals and movements in Kerala are recorded from the 1860s onwards, particularly

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<sup>94</sup> The information is based on Johnstone 2001:311; The presentation of IPC through the official website [www.ipcgeneralcouncil.org](http://www.ipcgeneralcouncil.org); and in [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India\\_Pentecostal\\_Church\\_of\\_God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India_Pentecostal_Church_of_God)

<sup>95</sup> Bergunder, Michael, *The South Indian Pentecostal Movement in the Twentieth Century*, 2008:27,28

among the Syrian Orthodox churches.<sup>96</sup> It was in the 1910s, however, that missionaries linked to the Azusa Street Movement came to India from the United States and founded Pentecostal churches. Among them was Robert Cook, a missionary with the Assemblies of God who later joined the Church of God founded by Indian national K.E. Abraham. Abraham was one of several national Pentecostal leaders that emerged in the 1920s in South India.<sup>97</sup>

Most of the IPC members came initially from other Christian denominations such as the Jacobites, the Orthodox Church and the Marthomites. IPC has about 6,500 local churches in the country with 65% of them in the state of Kerala. There are also around 2,500 congregations in the Middle East, Europe and North America, established as a result of missionary work.

The IPC was officially registered as a voluntary society in 1935 with the following objectives:

- a) To take over the management of 'The South Indian Pentecostal Church' together with its properties, movable and immovable which is being worked under the style and name 'The Indian Pentecostal Church of God' since the year 1934;
- b) To strengthen the bonds of love and charity among its members and to make them follow the exact ways and principles of the Lord Jesus Christ;
- c) For the diffusion of useful knowledge including the Full Gospel of Christ;
- d) To extend and establish and also to run schools, Orphanages, Widows' Homes, Invalids' Houses and other charitable Institutions;
- e) To affiliate to this Society any other Society, church or congregation in India or abroad having the same or similar faith and principles as The Indian Pentecostal Church of God;

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<sup>96</sup> Pulikottil, Paulson, 'Emergence of Indian Pentecostalism', in *Dharma Deepika*, 2002:48; Gabriel, Reuben Louis, 'Reflections on Indian Pentecostalism: Trends and Issues', in *Dharma Deepika* 2002:67

<sup>97</sup> Pulikottil 2002:52

- f) To acquire and manage movable and immovable properties and to construct, improve, alter and extent any buildings that may be found necessary for purposes of the Society;
- g) To sell, mortgage, lease or otherwise dispose of all or any of the properties, movable or immovable, belonging to the church;
- h) To accept donations if any offered of the free will of any member or other persons interested in the progress at the Society;
- i) And generally to do all such other acts as shall be found necessary incidental or conductive to the attainment of the above objects.<sup>98</sup>

These objectives demonstrate the intention of the IPC to function as a voluntary association, as well as the origin of its financial resources and their application in both evangelistic and social projects. Expansion and church activities are financed by local churches and in specific projects funds may be received from churches abroad. IPC is divided into thirteen administrative regions within India with a regional administration. Regional offices have also been established in other countries such as Nepal, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Yemen and Saudi Arabia, the United States of America and Canada.

The missionary work is coordinated by three boards, IPC Mission Board (cross-cultural mission), IPC Evangelism Board (local evangelistic activities) and IPC Charity Board (social projects). The leadership of these boards is elected by the General Convention. As a denominational mission movement the focus is on the establishment of IPC churches throughout India and in other countries. There is close co-operation primarily with other Pentecostal movements and all publicity emphasises the Pentecostal character of the IPC. The churches in other countries have been founded mainly by tent-makers who have moved elsewhere for secular jobs and have started local congregations

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<sup>98</sup> Article II from the IPC Memorandum of Association quoted in [www.ipcgeneralcouncil.org](http://www.ipcgeneralcouncil.org)

as a result of their personal testimony. This seems to be the most common strategy within the IPC for engaging in cross-cultural mission.

#### **4.5. Comparing the Case Studies**

The four cases show the diversity of mission movements in India today, with their different developments and characteristics. The two denominational institutions depend on bureaucratic centralised systems of governance and leadership for their strategy. The two inter-denominational agencies are more flexible and rely mainly on charismatic leaders with greater freedom in decision making. This is seen particularly in the case of the National Fellowship whose director is the original founder. Operation Mobilisation (OM) has gone through leadership transitions since the 1960s and there is a division of responsibilities between several leaders.

All four have an unmistakable focus on evangelism, aiming for the conversion of people to the Christian faith. Planting churches is an ultimate goal and the success is intimately related to the number of local congregations that have been founded. For the denominations these churches should automatically be linked to the central denominational administration and labelled in such a way that the ecclesiastical identification is evident. OM has a two-sided vocation of evangelism through its own teams and training national leaders for other organisations as well as its own.

The Church of South India has the most clearly expressed holistic theology, including the social dimension but also encouraging a political engagement in society. However, all four emphasise the importance of social projects in view of the fact that they work

with poorer classes in society. These social programmes are also important for financing the missionary work, being often subsidised by churches and foreign organisations.

Finances are a major problem for inter-denominational mission movements, exemplified in the OM and the National Fellowship case studies. Missionaries depend heavily on raising their own support from local churches and individuals. In some cases, as seen in the National Fellowship, local missionaries are adopted by foreign NGOs and missions and provided with a small amount of funding monthly. Surprising, perhaps, is the fact that a larger denominational structure such as the Pentecostal Church of God faces the same financial problems. This is very different from the situation in the Pentecostal churches studied in Brazil (IURD) and Ghana (The Church of Pentecost), which have developed an entrepreneurial organisational model that facilitates missionary expansion.

Voluntarism is therefore as important in the Pentecostal Church of God as it is in the inter-denominational agencies OM and National Fellowship. The willingness to move sacrificially to other places for missionising, without the guarantee of a fixed salary, is a characteristic expected of missionary workers. The Church of South India, in contrast, emphasises the importance of ordained ministers for the expansion and depends upon initiatives of the clergy in the dioceses for the establishment of new congregations.

As in Ghana, the denominational missions have a stronger focus on the diasporic groups and both the Church of South India and the Pentecostal Church of God have established churches in North America and Europe. OM missionaries from India have participated in international teams working in different regions of the world, for example working among Indian diaspora in the UK. Another similarity with Ghana is that the financial flow from the diaspora mission movements working nationally is significant.

The success in all four missions is measured primarily based on the number of conversions and churches established. The denominations give more emphasis to the establishment of congregations according to their own model, which is not surprising. National Fellowship is more open to co-operating with different ecclesiastic traditions, keeping, however, as close a relationship between the congregations as possible. The fact that National Fellowship does not encourage the construction of church buildings gives more flexibility to newer congregations but also some vulnerability when other Christian churches are organised in the same area offering attractive places for worship. Although OM teams evangelise and expect conversions, the mission is, by nature, different in its evaluation of success. The development of national leadership through training and practical involvement in mission activities is the main criterion for measuring achieved results.

Interestingly, relief projects and community development are increasingly mentioned in both the objectives of the mission organisations and the evaluation of results. The holistic approach to the Christian message among Evangelical missions has moved from mere emergency projects, such as distribution of food and clothes, and in some cases educational efforts, to a greater involvement in issues related to social injustice, violation of human rights, persecution against minorities, gender issues, etc.

## **5. Analysis of the Relation between Key Factors and the Emergence of Mission Movements**

Based on the historic review, and the analysis of voluntary associations and the developments of mission organisations in India, it is possible to relate the proposed key factors to the emergence of mission movements in the country.

### **5.1. Internal Factors**

#### **5.1.1. The existence of growing Evangelical churches with the explicit objective of expanding to other locations and countries**

According to Patrick Johnstone, in the year 2000 there were over 2,000 Christian denominations in India representing 2.4% of India's population.<sup>99</sup> Although the percentage is not high in comparison to other major religions in the country, it represents over twenty-four million people, making the Indian Church one of the largest in the world. The expansion of Christian churches during the last fifty years has generally corresponded to the population growth. The Evangelical churches have seen a growth particularly amongst the Pentecostal movements.

It is certainly hard to estimate the impact of newer church planting movements over the last ten years with thousands of home churches and smaller local congregations being established. Groups that have formed close ties with the Hindu community and adapted their liturgy and lifestyle to traditional cultures are not yet recorded statistically.

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<sup>99</sup> Johnstone and Mandryk 2001:310



The goal of extending into other regions and countries is clearly demonstrated by the Evangelical churches of today. The comity system, used in earlier years, has created pockets of Christian communities with many of the mainstream churches and mission organisations still being concentrated in the south of India. However, the newer church planting movements are moving northwards and reaching areas traditionally with Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic majorities.

The thirty Evangelical mission organisations interviewed as part of this study have all formulated strategies to target specific areas, establishing social projects and churches in states with a Christian minority.

#### **5.1.2. A theology of mission that includes the needed motivation for expansion**

Obedience to the Great Commission is often given as the reason for founding mission organisations and for establishing churches in other locations. Frequently the founders of mission organisations feel that there are not enough mission-related initiatives in their denomination or local church and that they are called by God to form new sending structures. The complex religious situation of the country, with political changes in many states, has also created the need for alternative strategies for evangelism, especially when the theology of mission emphasises the uniqueness of Christ. In contrast to the situation in Brazil, where the main religion is Christendom, mission movements in India are constantly confronted by religious opposition and are requested to give motives for their activities. The result is a strong conviction based on biblical hermeneutics and on the understanding of the church's central role in mission.

The motivation of having compassion for the poor is also seen in many cases. The argument is that followers of Christ should demonstrate the same holistic approach as

Jesus had to human suffering. 70% of the mission organisations interviewed were engaged in relief projects and all were involved in some kind of educational or community programmes. Although humanitarian motives are important, tendency is for Evangelical mission movements to justify their strategies biblically and in accordance with the example of Jesus.

Regarding the Hindu context, Robin Boyd refers to the truth (*Satya*) and, using Apostle Paul's expression in Athens 'the unknown God' (Acts 17:23), he says that

The 'unknown Christ' is there within Hinduism. He has given many blessings, but still his Name is not known, and his face has not been revealed. The mission of the Church of India is to proclaim the Name that is Love, and to demonstrate the Love which is his nature, so that the veil may be taken away, and God's true Name and nature be revealed in the face of Christ Jesus.<sup>100</sup>

Contextualisation is another important aspect of Indian theology of mission and a strong motivation for new forms of ministry. The difficulty Indians face in accepting the Christian message, owing to its identification with Western culture and with British colonialism, has already been discussed. Theology of mission in Indian context is therefore holistic and comprehensive. It deals with the historicity of the Christian Church in the country, emphasising its origin before the arrival of Europeans. It focuses on biblical mandates that believers should obey and involves a multi-faceted ministry with both proclamation to all and demonstration of love towards the marginalised in society.

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<sup>100</sup> Boyd, Robin, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, 1998:264

### **5.1.3. Entrepreneurial leadership organising mission associations**

The development of an entrepreneurial leadership is very much linked to India's independence. A new belief in national initiatives and in the potential for indigeneity influenced Evangelical churches as much as the rest of society. Nationalised churches, such as the Church of South India and the Indian Pentecostal Church of God, are good examples of this change in mindset within the Evangelical context.

International mission organisations have also played an important role in the formation of a new and innovative leadership in Evangelical churches. Operation Mobilisation has already been mentioned as probably having most influence in the training of future mission leaders in India. Several of these leaders are today heading international organisations. Entrepreneurial leadership is clearly present in the Evangelical churches and few mission movements have produced the quantity and quality of leaders as seen in India.

### **5.1.4. Available personnel and financial resources**

The main strength of the Indian mission movements is certainly the availability of personnel with a large number of volunteers in all the organisations. Financial resources are scarce by and large in the Evangelical churches which makes the need for sacrificial efforts by volunteers even greater. Most of the missionaries sent by Indian missions are bi-vocational combining evangelistic ministry with secular jobs.

Inter-denominational mission agencies struggle more with the lack of finances since their support comes from a variable number of local churches. Denominational structures have the advantage of a stronger and more constant collaboration from

churches affiliated to the denomination, which does not always solve all their financial needs as seen in the case of the Indian Pentecostal Church of God

## **5.2. External Factors**

### **5.2.1. A society with liberty to establish voluntary associations, based on existing models of voluntarism**

The democratic tradition of Indian politics, particularly after independence from British rule, has guaranteed freedom to establish voluntary associations and to exercise any kind of religious faith. The national parties and the variety of NGOs that have emerged during this period are clear examples of an accepted culture of free organisations protected by laws of equal rights and freedom of expression.

The models that have inspired mission movements come mostly from mission organisations that have been active in the country and the ‘faith mission’ genre is the most common among younger missions. Nonetheless, the contextual stance of many of these newer organisations derives from the critical approach to foreign models and the search for indigenous forms of expressing Christian faith and life.

Voluntarism is the base particularly for the ‘faith mission’ movements that have emerged in the last thirty years. Receiving little financial support, and building upon the willingness of local people to work for little or no pay, these mission movements fit very well the description of voluntary associations within the history of Western missions.

### **5.2.2. A growing economy in society and resources available for mission initiatives**

This is probably the weakest factor of mission movements in India, comparable to the situation in Ghana, but different from the developments in Brazil. Even though India is one of the growing economic powers among the developing countries, together with China and Brazil, the members of Evangelical churches come mainly from poorer spheres of society. This affects the way mission organisations work, emphasising a willingness to engage in sacrificial voluntarism as a key criterion for joining the mission and being sent to other locations. The choice of mission field is also related to the lack of finance, with a strong focus on rural areas and suburbs where a poorer population is more attracted to the kind of ministry that the missions can afford.

On the other hand, the relatively large number of Evangelical Christian churches points to the potential for financial support for new mission initiatives, especially those linked to major denominations such as the Church of South India. The increasing number of Christians involved in business may represent an alternative source of finance for mission enterprises.

As mentioned earlier, partnership with international organisations and members of the Indian diaspora in affluent countries may also be important sources of mission support. However, growing criticism of the continuing dependency on foreign sources to finance the Indian missions, particularly in evangelistic and church planting projects, points to a more determined search for alternative funding within the national context.

### **5.2.3. Social, political and ecclesiastical factors**

A decisive factor for the emergence of national leadership was the foreign mission organisations' decision to stop sending missionaries to India from the 1960s onwards.

This cessation of mission activities was partly due to concern for the security of the personnel in some locations and partly due to difficulties in obtaining visas. The process started due to nationalistic trends post independence and an increasing association between “being Indian” and Hinduism in several states. The government of Madhya Pradesh appointed a committee called Christian Missionary Activities Enquiry Committee (known as the Niyogi Commission after its chairman M.B. Niyogi), with the task of verifying accusations against Christian missionaries of proselytism.<sup>101</sup>

The reactions were reinforced by the growing number of American mission personnel operating in India and the increasing flow of foreign money linked to the missionary work, facilitated by generous laws of religious liberty. The number of people converting from Hinduism to the Christian faith, particularly in rural and tribal areas, concerned the mainly Hindu Indian authorities. The advance of Christian churches was interpreted as being the result of the investment in social and relief projects and thus a form of bribing people into a new religion.<sup>102</sup>

The recommendations that came out of the Commission’s report in 1956, included proposals for the independence of Christian churches in India from their founding organisations abroad, withdrawal of any missionaries whose primary objective was proselytisation and prohibition of using medical or other professional services and material resources specifically to achieve conversions.<sup>103</sup> These recommendations were intended not just for the state of Madhya Pradesh but for the whole country and advocated a rigid control by the national government of all missionary activities in the Indian sub-continent.

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<sup>101</sup> Kuriakose 2003:390

<sup>102</sup> Kuriakose 2003:391

<sup>103</sup> Kuriakose 2003:392-39

Ebe Sunder Raj admits in his book *The Confusion Called Conversion* that social action had an important impact on people, whilst not being the only reason for people converting.<sup>104</sup>

As already discussed in section 3.3 in this chapter, Conversion laws have been promulgated in several of the Indian states, limiting the possibility of conversion from one religion to another. The accusation against Christians has been that they use illegal means, convincing people to accept Christianity. According to Sunder Raj these laws can be questioned based on the Indian Constitution that assures full “freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion”.<sup>105</sup>

The Conversion laws, constitutional or not, have influenced the way Indian missions operate and the frequent persecution against Christian workers in some of the regions has caused deep concern to the mission leaders.

The nationalistic trend also affected the relationship with founding missions in the West, and a process of independence led several mission-based churches to search for autonomy. The three-self formula, defended by Western leaders in the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries, suddenly made sense for many Indian leaders. Consequently the role of foreign missionaries also changed in situations where they were still allowed to reside in the country. The result was a need and an opportunity for national leadership to emerge and for new initiatives to be born. Nationalism also provided a new vision of the country as a whole. Evangelical churches and mission organisations had the incentive to reach out to different regions of the Indian sub-

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<sup>104</sup> Raj, Ebe Sunder, *The Confusion Called Conversion*, 1998: 26

<sup>105</sup> Raj 1998: 139. The text is part of Section 3, article 25 of the Indian Constitution

continent and new strategies were adopted in order to establish branches particularly in unreached states.

### **5.3. International Factors**

#### **5.3.1. International exposure and contacts**

As with Brazil and Ghana, the exposure to global realities and the development of international contacts have strongly influenced the emergence of mission movements in India. Historically, Indian leaders and theologians have studied overseas, particularly in the UK, owing to natural links with British churches and mission organisations. A few Indian representatives attended the Edinburgh Conference of 1910 participating to some extent in the event and certainly giving important feedback to constituencies in their homeland.<sup>106</sup> Indian church leaders have also been active in the Ecumenical movement that came out of the Edinburgh Conference and the Church of South India was involved from the beginning in Ecumenical meetings.<sup>107</sup>

OM served as an effective link between emerging mission interest in Indian churches and the global trends of newer forms of mission engagement. International teams came to India and young Indians were part of similar teams going out to other parts of Asia and other continents. As already acknowledged OM played a significant part in the mission leadership of the 1970s and 1980s, exposing new leaders to international experience and global mission ideology. Other organisations also played a role in that international exposure, for example Youth with a Mission, International Fellowship of

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<sup>106</sup> Gairdner, W.H.T., *"Edinburgh 1910" – An Account & Interpretation of the World Missionary Conference*, 1910:58

<sup>107</sup> Ward, A. Marcus, *The Churches Move Together: The Story from 1910 Onwards*, 1968:43



Evangelical Students (IFES), Campus Crusade for Christ and Christian Literature Crusade (CLC).

### **5.3.2. Diasporic groups**

The Indian diaspora is extremely large with around twenty-two million Indians living abroad.<sup>108</sup> Most of the diasporic population is not Christian but a considerable number have converted to Christianity in countries such as the United States and the UK.<sup>109</sup> Some came from Christian families in India and established churches as soon as they arrived in their new homeland.

The missionary focus on diasporic groups is strongest among denominational missions, which aim to establish local churches in the different countries where Indians have settled. Out of twenty-five inter-denominational missions that were interviewed during this study, not one declared that they had worked among people of their own culture in other countries. This clearly shows the different objectives between Indian denominational and inter-denominational mission organisations with a clearer cross-cultural motivation among inter-denominational structures.

Interestingly, the flow of financial resources from Evangelical diasporic groups back to India applies to both denominational and inter-denominational organisations. Twenty-three out of thirty sending mission movements stated that they receive funds from foreign donors and ten that they are partially subsidised by churches in other countries. In many of these cases the sources are individual Indians and diasporic groups in Europe and North America.

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<sup>108</sup> Johnstone 2001:318

<sup>109</sup> There are no available statistics on the number of Christians among the diasporic groups. There are, however, large Indian Evangelical communities in the United States and the UK

### **5.3.3. National associations and international co-operation**

IMA has played an important role in promoting cross-cultural mission within and outside India. Despite a membership almost exclusively made up of inter-denominational agencies, IMA has had a strong influence on Evangelical churches in general and through its consultations and publications produced a generation of church and mission leaders that is highly involved in missionary activities. IMA serves also as a bridge to other mission movements around the globe, facilitating contacts and the development of cooperative efforts.

Today, Indian missions are very much involved in international co-operation and strategic alliances that focus on less evangelised people groups and on specialised ministries such as bible translation, media and prayer movements. Such international collaboration has encouraged new mission organisations to emerge, increasing the participation of Indian Evangelicals in the global missionary enterprise and stimulating the sending of missionaries both within the Indian continent and abroad.

## **Conclusion**

The history of Christian churches in India and the background to mission movements in the Indian context, show that these factors have been present and decisive for the emergence and development of mission organisations over the last four decades. It is certainly true that not all the factors have had the same significance, but each has contributed to the growth of Indian initiatives in cross-cultural mission. Without doubt, the weakest aspect is the economic reality, which hinders growth and the application of bolder strategies to send more missionaries to other countries. International partnerships

and receipts of funds from diasporic groups, foundations and organisations outside India have compensated for this to some extent.

In comparison to Brazil, India stands out as having a stronger nationalistic stance, resulting in an almost exclusive leadership of nationals in Evangelical churches from the 1970s onwards. The moratorium on foreign missionaries, owing to restrictions and control of missionary activities by the government forced mission organisations to look to an emerging national leadership in the country and provided opportunities for candidates to deputise for and ultimately replace foreign leaders.

The translation process is seen in both the dissemination of Christianity in the Indian sub-continent and in the emergence of mission movements, following patterns and models brought by the mission churches. The contextualisation of foreign models has created sending organisations that operate according to Indian conditions and deploy innovative forms of cross-cultural mission. These alternative models are often based on the capacity of the missionary to be self-sufficient, working professionally or raising support through personal contacts. In some cases, a partnership between sending agency and receiving organisation provides the necessary funds.

However, the capacity of the Christian message to be fully translated into Indian culture has been tested to its uppermost limit. The complexity of inserting a religious system into a setting with a completely different worldview requires profound knowledge of both realities; in this case the Christian dogma and the Indian mindset. Of the countries studied, there is no doubt that India is the one where Christianity has had the hardest task to impose itself upon and win the confidence of the nationals. Translation alone was not enough to conquer the minds and hearts of the Indian people. A long process of

adaptation and contextualisation of the Christian doctrine was needed in order to have chance of being fully accepted. According to most interviewees, this process is still happening; only a genuine autochthonous theology and church practice will give the Christian faith an Indian face and the ownership necessary if Christianity is to no longer be seen as 'foreign'.

The Evangelical Mission Movements that have emerged in India face the same challenge as the Evangelical churches in general, having to prove their relevance and aptitude as appropriate structures for sending Indian missionaries. The factors mentioned above have been decisive for the self-missionising process seen in Evangelical circles, and have made India one of the largest sending countries. Yet, Indian mission movements wrestle daily with the tension of following international models of mission and finding suitable ways of functioning according to local conditions. In Chapter Seven a fuller comparative study of the three countries in question demonstrates how these factors have affected each in different ways.

## CHAPTER 7

### EVANGELICAL MISSION MOVEMENTS COMPARED

Three countries have been studied, Brazil, Ghana and India, representing three continents where Evangelicalism has grown rapidly in the last four decades. Mission movements have appeared as a result of this growth, contributing to continued expansion of the established churches. In this chapter an analytical comparison is made between the three countries, highlighting common characteristics and the various factors that make mission movements different from each other. The contributing factors provide the main outline for this analysis, although other aspects are also commented on in order to clarify peculiarities of each context.

The chapter is divided in three sections. The first is a general comparison between the countries regarding the translation process in diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, relation to colonial powers and political and socio-economic developments. These have all affected the emergence of Evangelical churches and mission movements. The second part focuses on the internal, external and international factors and how these are applicable to each context, resulting in the emergence of mission movements in the three countries. The third part is a comparison of NSCs (exemplified by Brazil, Ghana and India) with OSCs based on points raised earlier in this study. The chapter ends with a conclusion emphasising the validity of the analysis based on the contributing factors.

# **1. The Translatability Principle of Christianity applied in Brazil, Ghana and India**

The history of the expansion of Christianity demonstrates that the translatability principle, as formulated by Andrew Walls, is a valid starting point for analysing the establishment of Christian churches in the studied countries, shown by the following concise comparison between Brazil, Ghana and India. The question is how applicable the principle is in explaining further developments of established churches that have resulted in mission movements. An evaluation of the translatability principle in relation to the establishment of mission initiatives in these countries is therefore necessary.

## **1.1. Comparing the Translation Process**

A general comparison between the three countries shows the divergent contexts in which Christianity was established, demonstrating that the Christian faith could be more easily translated into some societies than into others, resulting in a stronger or weaker ground for Evangelical mission movements to emerge. In any encounter between Christianity and a receiving culture mutual influence occurs and neither will remain exactly the same. The contextualisation of Christian values and expressions will be, therefore, an on-going process, constantly challenged by these dynamic changes. However, the acceptance or rejection of the foreign faith will greatly depend on the degree of compatibility between the worldviews of Christianity and the receiving culture. From a criterion of written documented material, as in the case of the Christian faith, it seems that cultures with fewer written records have been easier to penetrate, such as the African ethnic groups and the Brazilian indigenous tribes. There are,

certainly, other factors that need to be taken into consideration.<sup>1</sup> However, the comparison is based on the country analysis done in earlier chapters. In order to emphasise key elements that have major importance for understanding the emergence of mission initiatives, some of the historic developments have been summarised.

Following the expansion of trade routes and colonial enterprises, the Christian faith was introduced to European colonies in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Although resistance was expressed in different ways in each country, there are clear similarities in the difficulty that Christianity had in establishing roots among the native population. Interestingly, two of the three countries studied, Brazil and Ghana, had their first contact with Christian faith through Portuguese seafarers and the epoch of Portuguese incursion in India gave new impulse to missionary efforts on the sub-continent.

Christendom was established and eventually became the main religion in Brazil and Ghana, while in India the Christian Church is still represented by a minority of the population. One of the reasons for this is the diverse religious background of each country. Brazil and Ghana were populated by animistic ethnic groups and in the Northern Region of Ghana there was a Muslim presence. India had a sophisticated religious and philosophical system already in place. It was definitely easier to impose a foreign religion on animistic people, especially if a syncretistic approach was used. In India, the situation was different, particularly in the higher Hindu castes, with strong reactions against foreign influence and very few converts in the beginning. The anti-conversion laws in India have also contributed to inhibit the establishment of Christian churches in some regions. In order to understand the differences in the development of Evangelical churches in these three countries as well as the theology and the objectives

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<sup>1</sup> In the interviews with mission leaders in Brazil, Ghana and India, spiritual factors are often mentioned as important for the acceptance or rejection of the Christian message by a specific group

reflected in the mission movements, it is important to acknowledge these different religious backgrounds. In Brazil the dialogue has been with the Roman Catholic Church. In Ghana theology and praxis have been developed in relation to colonial Protestantism and indigenous beliefs, while in India the opposition has been mainly in relation to non-Christian religions.

Looking to more recent growth in the number of Evangelicals in the three countries, Pentecostalism has grown faster than traditional and historic Evangelicalism, as in many other nations. One of the reasons for this is the fact that Pentecostal churches have given more emphasis to local spiritual beliefs, especially regarding evil spirits and the need for deliverance, an area where many uneducated people have fears and concerns.<sup>2</sup> Another aspect frequently stressed by newer Pentecostal movements, is the promise of prosperity, whilst offering special prayer sessions for people who are unemployed, facing financial crisis or having health problems. The growth of Pentecostalism has therefore been primarily among poorer classes in Brazil and Ghana and low-castes and Dalits in India.

On the other hand, mainstream Evangelical churches have also grown although at a slower rate than the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. Mission movements have emerged both in the mainstream Evangelical and in Pentecostal churches, as seen in the case studies of each country, often replicating the same characteristics of ecclesiastical practice in the new churches that have been established. The translation process of Christianity continues, now going also from the traditional mission fields to other nations around the globe.

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<sup>2</sup> See discussion on AICs and Pentecostalism in Ghana in Chapter 5, point 1.3. Meyer describes the challenge people have faced, trying to combine the Christian faith with traditional African beliefs. Meyer, Birgit, *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana*, 1999:134



The self-missionising initiatives in NSCs indicate that the spiral effect of 'translation – contextualisation – self-missionising – translation' (see Diagram 1 in Chapter One) is a reality among Evangelicals. Without a self-missionising process based on contextualised models for mission, the result will be stagnation and eventually the interruption of the translation sequence of Christianity. This is exemplified by the fact that mission movements in NSCs have taken over very much of the missionary initiative around the globe.

The critical question that the comparison of cultural and religious backgrounds raises is related to the inherent capacity of the Christian faith to be translated into any context. The process of translation seems to have developed differently in each situation, owing to the particular characteristics of a society. By and large, Christianity has had the ability to find ways of connecting with different groups of people although this has taken time and involved a long process of adaptation and assimilation.<sup>3</sup>

In the cases of Brazil, Ghana and India, the process of becoming acceptable to local people has varied according to the distance of the Christian doctrines to the indigenous worldviews. When a local worldview had already been modified and affected by Western influence, the establishment of Christian churches was easier and faster. This is particularly seen in Brazil where Evangelical missions found a fertile ground for evangelism prepared by the Roman Catholic presence and strong influence in the country for centuries.

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<sup>3</sup> This according to Walls, Bediako and Sanneh, as discussed in Chapter One, Section 5. Assimilation is the term they use as synonymous to contextualisation

Another question is whether the translation of the Christian faith has really been based on its central message or on practices associated with Christianity.<sup>4</sup> There is no doubt that Christians in the receiving countries would define their faith as based upon the Bible, recognising, however, that there may be different interpretations and application of the Scriptures. Mission-originated churches have a tendency to follow the practices of their mother churches while those founded by national leaders often introduce new customs and ways of expressing the faith. It is quite clear that Christianity has a new face with the strong development of Evangelical and Roman Catholic churches in the Global South and that the translated practices that accompanied the message are in a constant process of being contextualised.

In the globalisation trend that influences the whole world, political, economic and religious ideologies are often translated from one country to another, going through a process of contextualisation as well. The focus of this thesis, however, is on Evangelicalism and the way the Christian faith has been translated, not denying the possibility of other ideologies and religions going through a similar process. The uniqueness of Christianity as a religious system that needs to be implanted in all nations is an issue of faith and adherents to other religious beliefs will certainly not agree with that perspective. Translatability has also to do with external factors that facilitate or hinder a complete contextualisation of the translated ideology and do not only depend on the capacity of a certain message or belief to be accepted and contextualised in a receiving culture. As seen in the historical summaries, the particular situation of a people has either favoured the introduction of the Christian faith or it has not. That means that the translation capacity of Christianity is not absolute but varies depending

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<sup>4</sup> A deeper question could also be whether it is possible to separate the central message of Christianity from its expressions and practices. However, contextualisation of the translated Christian faith in a particular culture has the objective of finding local expressions and practices faithful to the Christian core values

on the context. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that Christianity in itself is not stable and acquires new forms of expression in the contact with new cultures and ideologies. Although Christians would argue that the response has more to do with the way in which the Christian faith is presented and the degree of cross-cultural communication that is used, history shows that even with similar kinds of approach and of strategies, Christianity has developed differently around the globe. This does not refute the validity of Christian beliefs but demonstrates the fact that the propagation of these beliefs has been more successful in some places than in others. Using a biblical metaphor, the seed has been planted in a variety of soils some of which have been fertile and others of which have not.

One should therefore not overemphasise or present a simplistic picture of the power of translatability of the Christian faith, particularly into areas where there is already a strong philosophical and religious system. As seen, Christianity was often introduced by force. There are, nonetheless, mission movements, particularly those characterised by humanitarian and religious convictions, which have acted differently. Newer mission movements, for example those which have emerged in the Global South, would certainly include themselves in this latter category of missions.

Observation of communities that have more easily accepted Christianity, and where people more rapidly have converted to the Christian faith, shows that social status has some importance. Acceptance of the Christian message has been higher among the poor especially when there has been an emphasis on material prosperity and on faith healing, as in many of the Pentecostal groups. This could be the result of an intentional strategy used by these churches and mission movements but also a natural consequence of how the message is preached. Using relief and practical help to attract people to a certain

ideology or religion is often a characteristic of movements that search for expansion. Although recognising that missionary activity in the social sphere may cause conversions, the mission leaders interviewed as part of this study denied that that would be the main purpose. The Charismatic movements have often fascinated younger people, mainly due to their less traditional and more international and interactive style of worship. These factors, and the sociological aspect of belonging to a global community, have certainly played an important role in the growth of these churches.

## **1.2. Evaluation of the Translatability Principle<sup>5</sup>**

The translatability principle has strengths and weaknesses. It gives a fairly good picture of the establishment of national Christian churches in other cultures and is therefore a starting point for identifying internal factors contributing to the upsurge of mission movements on the traditional 'mission fields'. It looks mainly at the link between the sending models and the way the planted churches have assimilated church traditions in their local context. The principle is also applicable to the more recent process of translation of Christianity out of NSCs in the efforts to evangelise 'their' mission fields. The same aspiration of transmission of the message and translation of Christian values and beliefs into other cultural contexts traditionally seen in OSCs is also seen in NSCs today. Confidence in the validity of the translatability of the Gospel is confirmed by the leaders that have been interviewed during this research process.

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<sup>5</sup> The term 'translatability' is certainly more *etic* than *emic*. The mission leaders who have been interviewed in this study never used the term. The language used by them would include expressions such as import/export, shared truths, imposed, etc. Therefore, the term is useful primarily when the transmission of the Christian faith is analysed from a sending perspective. The principle as such is certainly valid also from a receiving point of view

On the other hand, the translation of Christianity has frequently been superficial, not targeting the deeper levels of the receiving culture and only influencing customs and behaviour and not values, beliefs and worldview. The 'package' translated has often introduced ecclesiastic models, Western culture and stereotypes of how a 'true Christian' should look like. With important exceptions, the key elements of Christianity have often been discovered by nationals once they have had access to the Bible in their own language and the opportunity to reflect theologically on its content.

One can question whether or not models of mission structures were translated in the same way that schools, hospitals, theological seminaries and denominational structures were part of a necessary set of 'Christian' institutions and thus imposed on the newer churches. Certainly there was an expectation from the beginning that the newly established churches should expand, particularly in their own neighbourhood and country, and thus give continuation to the translation of Christianity. The motivational theology of mission, as one of the internal contributing factors to the emergence of mission initiatives, was transmitted as a normal consequence of the growth of the church in any context. When younger churches looked for sending models, it was quite obvious in the initial stage that those that had come to them should be emulated. However, when it comes to cross-cultural mission in other countries this is not the case. As seen in the historical review, it took years of foreign mission before expatriate missionaries started to encourage national churches to invest in international mission. Another important factor was that the cost of all these institutions could not be absorbed by the newly established churches, leading to financial dependency on mother missions for maintenance of educational and social institutions. The model given for missionary outreach was equally costly and, in most cases, useless for less wealthy communities.

A limitation of the translatability principle, therefore, is that it does not provide a complete explanation of why these mission movements have been started and the kind of organisations that have emerged. The translated message, through transmission and initial contextualisation, has been re-interpreted by the receivers and the church models adopted have constantly been modified according to local necessities and realities. Pragmatic considerations have many times overshadowed theological or dogmatic principles both in terms of biblical hermeneutics and ecclesiastical structures.

It is important also to consider the fact that before the Bible was translated to a vernacular language, permitting deeper theological reflection by nationals, the missionary presence had already transmitted ideas and doctrines, especially regarding the ways in which the Christian faith should be expressed. As discussed in earlier chapters, the recognition of national leadership frequently took a long time owing to lack of confidence in the nationals or uncertainty whether they would defend and give continuity to the imported systems. On the other hand, one should not underestimate the ongoing reflective practice regarding the inherited ecclesiastical tradition and doctrinal teaching in which NSCs engage today. A contextualisation process is natural when people read the Bible and try to apply its principles to their particular context, alongside the received tradition. According to Míguez Bonino

Revelation and faith are always absolutes: they are the revelation of the only true God, nothing more and nothing less... At the same time, all understanding and expression of this revelation, all experience of this faith is necessarily relative: conditioned by time, place, culture, sex, temperament, social status, language, and mode of expression.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Míguez Bonino, José, 'Universalidad y contextualidad en teología' [Universality and contextualisation in theology], in *Cuadernos de Teología*, 16:1-2, 87-97, quoted by Davies, Paul, *Faith Seeking Effectiveness: The Missionary Theology of José Míguez Bonino*, 2006:69

Davies agrees with Bonino's statement, saying that "the Church's reading of the Bible, therefore, is always a contextual reading".<sup>7</sup>

This also applies to the translated message and mission models that come to a 'mission field'. Seeking effectiveness for their mission endeavour, old forms are refurbished and new models are created. Based on the seed of biblical revelation and ecclesiastical tradition that was planted from outside, watered and fertilised by local interpretation of the mission of the church in its specific context, a missionary vision has grown and developed in Evangelical churches in NSCs.

The translatability principle is therefore a valid framework for analysing the concept of sending in mission and the initial process of establishing local church structures. However, in order to fully understand the reasons for the emergence and growth of mission movements in NSCs, the model is not totally comprehensive and other factors need to be considered as well. These mission movements involve a combination of translated models and local development of autochthonous expressions of missionary concern. It is when the national leadership of the Church takes ownership of the process that viable and contextualised mission structures are formed. The contributing factors are therefore more diverse than the translatability principle suggests.

## **2. Factors Contributing to the Emergence of Mission Movements**

Despite differences, Christianity has established roots in Brazil, Ghana and India, having a significant number of adherents in all three. The desire to win converts and

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<sup>7</sup> Davies 2006:69

increase church membership has been the strongest motivation behind the expansion of Evangelical churches. In order to bring this about, mission organisations have been founded and developed, following patterns originally seen in the West.

The emergence of autochthonous mission movements is a more recent phenomenon. Although most denominations previously had some kind of expansion strategy, specific organisations for mission were mainly founded from the 1970s onwards, and their number has increased significantly in the last thirty years. Internal, external and international factors have contributed to this. The following analysis compares these factors in Brazil, Ghana and India.

## **2.1. Internal Factors**

The internal factors are directly related to the translation process of Christianity into each country and the legacy of foreign mission movements establishing churches that have developed into national organisations with a capacity to engage in cross-cultural mission independently from their mother missions.

### **2.1.1. Existence of growing Evangelical churches with the explicit objective of expanding to other locations and countries**

The growth of Evangelicalism in Brazil, Ghana and India has been clearly demonstrated in their respective chapters. Although the percentage of Evangelicals in India has remained static in comparison to the overall population, their number is surpassed only by a few countries including the United States and Brazil. The growth of



Evangelicalism is today three times higher than the population growth.<sup>8</sup> In Ghana 33% of the population consider themselves Evangelicals and 18% of the Brazilians belong to an Evangelical church.<sup>9</sup>

Historically, several factors have contributed to the spreading of Evangelicalism such as strong revivals in Brazil in the 1950s and 1960s, national evangelisation strategies directed towards unreached areas in Ghana and mass-movements in India. Emphasis on national evangelisation is an important legacy from foreign missions and financial and human resources continue to be invested by Western organisations for that purpose.

Competition between churches and denominations should not be disregarded in the analysis of Evangelical growth. The ambition of having branches all over the country is a characteristic of most denominations, motivated both by the desire to share the Gospel and the rivalry between churches. There are, however, examples of partnerships where joint efforts lead to the establishment of one congregation, leaving local people to decide the ecclesiastical profile they would like to adopt. The use of media, such as radio and TV-programs, magazines and more recently the Internet, has augmented the 'battle for the souls', creating a phenomenon of religious communities that do not necessarily gather in church buildings but meet 'virtually' through these media. The effect on established churches has been a lower commitment and loyalty by members to their local church and considerable migration of people from more historical traditions to newer Pentecostal movements. In light of this constant transfer of people between churches, it is difficult to verify the accuracy of the numbers and the real growth of Evangelicalism. Nevertheless, over a longer period, it is possible to see the expansion and confirm the strong presence of Evangelical churches.

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<sup>8</sup> Johnstone and Mandryk 2001:309,311

<sup>9</sup> Johnstone and Mandryk 2001:119,120,274,275

Mission movements have, therefore, been a natural outcome of these growing churches, as an expression of necessary structures for sending people to other places within and outside the country. However, the growth by itself is not enough to bring about a missionary concern and activity. There is also need for a clear motivation that ignites mission initiatives.

### **2.1.2. A theology of mission that includes the needed motivation for expansion**

It is important to realise that motivation for mission and Evangelical mission theologies have developed differently in the three countries owing to the divergent religious background in which the dialogue happens.

The motivation for mission engagement includes both explicit and implicit motives, as seen in Chapter Two. A similar blend of motives is present among mission leaders and missionaries of Brazil, Ghana and India. The explicit motives are often based on an elaborated theology of mission, while the implicit and undeclared motives are generally considered human weaknesses. In interviews with mission leaders, all responses fell under the category of explicit motives. Questioned about other motives for missionary work such as romantic feelings, adventure and international entrepreneurialism, mission leaders tended to deny the existence of these or to associate them with a few immature missionaries. In some cases, these motives were attributed to other competing organisations but not to their own situation.

Therefore, theology of mission has essentially contemplated explicit and declared motives such as love and compassion, obedience to the biblical mandate, the necessary conversion to the Christian faith, the expansion of the church and the eschatological

urgency.<sup>10</sup> By definition, in Evangelical circles the starting point is the biblical text and an affirmed priority given to biblical principles of missionary work, grounded particularly on the so-called 'great commission'. Hermeneutical schools and mission praxis have, nevertheless, great influence on how theology is elaborated. Mission movements follow usually ecclesiastical traditions, especially when they are direct outcomes of church denominations. Inter-denominational agencies may, however, create their own theology of mission, following with few exceptions basic Evangelical beliefs.

Western missionaries who came to these countries carried, of course, theological biases from their homeland and church background. Their theology of mission, by and large, included the necessary motivation for evangelising people in the mission field and establishing local congregations in as many places as possible. Few missionaries had the vision of a national church that could become autonomous and expand outside the country borders by its own resources. Brazil, Ghana and India were seen as poor countries that needed help and it was not expected that they would be able to contribute to nationwide and worldwide evangelisation out of their poverty. The result was a strong emphasis on local outreach without financial resources and using lay people as much as possible.

The three-self formula (self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating) was certainly an important step forward in giving national churches independence from their mother missions. However, the way missionaries continued to work investing huge amounts of foreign resources in buildings, social institutions and salaries to local leaders, hindered nationals from assuming the responsibility the three-self formula

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<sup>10</sup> The implicit and explicit motives are further explained in Chapter Two, Section 2

postulated. This consequently had an impact on the application of theological principles for mission and the motivation for national churches to engage in cross-cultural mission.

Contextualisation is another important aspect of missiological discussion. Lack of contextualised ecclesiastical models and worship styles created strong reactions against imported Christianity and, in many cases, complete rejection. Mission theology often included a long list of approved customs and conventions added to a fixed set of dogmas. Converts were expected to follow these rules in order to be considered 'true Christians'. As seen in earlier chapters, these attitudes from mission leaders and missionaries (and sometimes also from national leadership), created barriers to the acceptance of the Gospel message and reinforced the foreignness of Christianity in Ghana and India.

Autochthonous theologies of mission have been developed in Brazil, Ghana and India, responding to the challenges imposed by Western missions and as a natural consequence of theological reflection that comes with the maturity of religious movements. In Brazil, the Latin American Theological Fraternity (FTL) has exercised significant influence on Evangelical mission movements, although not as much as conservative theological schools originating in the West and represented by denominational theological institutions and church boards. FTL was stimulated both by student movements and Liberation Theology, resulting in a more analytical and holistic theology than commonly seen in Evangelical circles in Brazil. FTL represents, therefore, an effort to produce contextualised missiology based on Latin American reality and peculiar challenges. Depending on ecclesiastical background and theological orientation of the leadership, mission movements have been more or less affected by this continental emphasis on mission. Regardless, however, of how missiology is done

and perceived, mission movements have had a strong theological foundation for mission engagement, whether inherited from foreign missions or produced on their own soil.

In Ghana, the strongest appeal for mission engagement has been the challenge of unevangelised ethnic groups within the country. Behind it is, of course, a theological understanding of God's saving purpose through acceptance of Jesus Christ in a process of conversion to Christian faith. In Ghana, the tension between Western theology which was incapable of dealing with African spiritual realities (the so-called 'excluded middle') and the emphasis given by national leaders on contextualised theology has resulted in Ghana a new missiology. This missiology is based on historical Evangelical premises, whilst spiritual and social realities are also taken seriously, often with a strong criticism of earlier colonialism and Western legacy. The Akrofi-Christaller Centre outside Accra is the best example of a seminary and a research centre in Ghana that fosters Evangelical theology born out of an African context. However, the situation in Ghanaian churches is very similar to the Brazilian, and the adaptation to a more contextualised missiology depends highly upon ecclesiastical background and the theological orientation of the leaders.

In India several theological centres have promoted indigenous missiology and theological colleges mainly in the south have contributed to vast production of literature on missiological themes. As in Brazil and Ghana, this autochthonous reflection emphasises holistic mission seen today in most Evangelical mission movements, particularly in the inclusion of social concern in their strategies. The major motivation, nonetheless, is the conversion of unreached people groups and the largest investment is in evangelisation.

Interviews with mission leaders and records of mission movements show that there is often a basic understanding of mission as an obligation and a function of the church. Frequently there is, however, a lack of deeper reflection on how mission should be carried out and the implications of spreading the Christian message to other cultures. More sophisticated missiology focuses mostly on the influence the local church should have on its own society and has seldom engaged in a dialogue with anthropological and cross-cultural issues. This is certainly one of the reasons why denominational missions in particular, but not exclusively, have simplified the missionary process establishing congregations in other places that are replicas of their home churches with almost no contextualisation. When there is a real effort of thinking through missiological issues, the mission organisations are more successful in the adaptation to receiving cultures.

### **2.1.3. Entrepreneurial leadership organising mission associations**

A decisive factor for emergence of mission movements has been the existence of leadership with initiative and ability to develop voluntary associations. In all three countries, the handover of leadership from missionaries to nationals has been a major challenge. With ecclesiastical structures based on Western standards and traditions, foreign missions in general initially had difficulties in finding leaders who could lead churches in the same way as the missionaries. The requirement has been basically that the nationals should have the same skills, training and philosophy of leadership as the missionary, which was generally not the case. One example of this, frequently cited in discussions on organisational development, was the foreign accounting system used by missionaries. By and large, national leaders had not been trained to manage finances in the same way and the bookkeeping in the country was generally very simple. The result was that the missions did not find local people trusted with handling finances. Although

training nationals for future responsibility, many missionaries had a tendency to remain in positions of control.

Nationalistic trends in society had, however, a strong influence on Christian churches and encouraged national leaders to fight for space and opportunities. When established institutions could not be changed and fully contextualised to local culture, or when missions did not accept a nationalising process, new churches and denominations were founded. In many cases autochthonous mission movements were born in this way. An entrepreneurial leadership has come forward in Brazil, Ghana and India, partly as a result of the natural course of nationalising progression, owing to the growth of Christian churches. The intentional training of people with capacity to initiate and develop organisations has contributed to the appearance of nationals in leading posts. In Brazil and Ghana, WEC International adopted this approach to education. In India it was mainly Operation Mobilisation that initially prepared the future missionary leadership. Theological seminaries, specialised mission courses and secular education have also played an important role in this development.

Charismatic and authoritative leadership is closely linked to entrepreneurialism and is the most common characteristic of mission leaders in these countries, as discussed in Chapter Three. In most cases, mission movements have been started by one person with or without the support of a few others. Particularly in inter-denominational organisations, the figure of a strong founder and leader is frequent. However, even in denominational mission structures, it has often been the initiative of one influential person that has significantly enhanced the missionary work, as in the case of the Brazilian Baptist Convention. There are, nonetheless, clear examples of team

leadership, sometimes based on denominational by-laws as in the Church of South India, or on philosophy of leadership such as in the Torchbearers in Ghana.

Organisational models in society are emulated by mission movements and the tendency is to democratise the leadership of mission according to how the democratisation process advances in respective countries. There is, though, a certain delay in conservative contexts where traditional ecclesiastical forms may survive longer, as in Pentecostal movements in general. This is clearly seen in the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God in Brazil, the Church of Pentecost in Ghana and the India Pentecostal Church of God. The strong central leadership formed by bishops and pastors decide the directions of the church with hardly any participation of the members.

The leadership issue is certainly one of the most important internal factors for the emergence of mission movements. There are numerous examples of growing churches with apparently an expansionist theology that are not engaged in cross-cultural mission, owing probably to the lack of entrepreneurial trained leaders. Some of the larger denominations in the studied countries are among these. The appearance of such leadership also depends on opportunities given by the context. Difficulty and resistance to let younger, non-traditional and more creative leaders take over responsibility for churches and denominational structures seems to be one of the critical aspects. In cultures where there is high respect for elderly people and leadership is often seen as a lifelong right, transition to younger leaders is always a challenge.

An interesting question related to entrepreneurialism and mission is the emulation of leadership models from the West. In Evangelical circles, the imitation of successful American TV and mega-church pastors is a flagrant example. This is certainly true for



those who aim for large churches in their own country, but affects mission strategies as well and places even more stress on numerical criteria for success than qualitative involvement with the receiving society. Reactions to that from Latin American missiologists such as Escobar have already been mentioned.

#### **2.1.4. Available personnel and financial resources**

A fourth internal factor is the availability of volunteers and of financial resources for establishing a mission movement. Personnel and resources are the basic elements of a sending structure. In conversation with mission leaders, the emphasis on people as the most important resource for doing mission is evident. Most of the organisations have elaborate strategies for recruiting candidates through visits to local churches, special short-term programmes, interactive websites, etc. A factor common to mission movements in the Global South seems to be the fact that there is no shortage of personnel. Young people, in particular, attend the appeals for missionary service and volunteer to go to other cultures and countries, inspired by a combination of motives that includes the desire for adventure and religious conviction.<sup>11</sup>

Financial resources, however, are often a problem. Several of the mission leaders interviewed said that if they had more money they would be able to send out more missionaries. On the other hand, considering the fact that mission movements have grown in the Global South and that the numbers of cross-cultural missionaries from NSCs are reaching the same quantity as those sent by OSCs, the existence of financial resources is obvious. Missionaries from NSCs are definitely not as well paid as those from OSCs, but nonetheless there are funds enough in NSCs to maintain people in other

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<sup>11</sup> Waldemiro Timchak, personal interview June 2005. This is seen especially in the so-called 'Radical Mission' with teams of young people evangelising in areas of difficult access. One example is the 'Radical Project' of the Brazilian branch of World Horizons, presented in Pierson, Paul, *Emerging Streams of Church and Mission*, 2004:103-116

nations. In some cases, partnership with receiving churches or with other mission organisations has provided the needed financial support.

A growing concern in NSCs is the quality of their sending structures. It is not just the matter of having a large number of people available or unlimited financial resources that gives viability to a mission organisation. Therefore an increasing amount of resources is invested in capacity building, member care and on-field training in order to secure high quality of personnel. This relocation of funds has required, in some cases, a slower growth of the number of missionaries sent abroad and the concentration of efforts in fewer countries.

## **2.2. External Factors**

The external factors relate to the society in which the mission movement is placed and the influence that the surrounding environment has on the emergence of mission initiatives in NSCs.

### **2.2.1. A society with liberty to establish voluntary associations based on existing models of voluntarism**

The main organisational model for mission movements in the history of Christianity has been the voluntary association. Voluntarism related to mission movements could be defined according to three dimensions, as already affirmed in Chapter Three: the non-governmental type of organisation as part of civil society; the free-will character of the associations, build upon the participation of people by their own choice, accepting the organisational rules; and the way these organisations operate, based on free financial

donations and on volunteers, often giving their time without expecting payment or a guaranteed salary.

Entrepreneurial leaders would have had difficulties in founding mission movements if there has been no freedom to establish organisations based on voluntarism. In all three countries there is a long history of voluntary associations and liberty to found these, in contrast to nations where lack of freedom has hindered the development of the civil society. Frequently the voluntary associations were part of lay movements started by people and not as a result of top-down imposition. This is particularly seen in political parties, labour unions and social revolutionary movements that came forward as a reaction to the oppressive systems. Mission movements have in many ways the same characteristics of rebellious initiatives, challenging status quo and hierarchical ecclesiastic structures as seen in the historical review. People on the ground are often more open to changes than leaders who defend traditional orders. It is therefore not surprising that the nationalisation process of Evangelical churches followed closely the battle for political independence in the countries studied. With some important exceptions, for example a few mission movements that were founded at the decision of denominational boards, mission organisations are very much part of the non-conformist tendency that appears from time to time in the history of Evangelicalism.

Since independence, national constitutions have confirmed the right of non-government organisations to exist and the civil society has built on voluntary associations in different areas, including religious spheres. In more recent years, political developments have resulted in increasing democratic foundations counting on a stronger participation of diverse sectors of society. Voluntary associations are consequently an integrated part of facilities offered to the population and, in many cases, fill gaps in services that

governments have no resources to provide or do not see as priority. The attitude of the authorities is therefore generally positive towards these associations, provided that the activities do not generate dissatisfaction or criticism against the government.

Examples of voluntarism are seen particularly in religious organisations such as Roman Catholic orders and social and educational projects run by Evangelical churches. The enormous variety of voluntary associations, including many foreign relief agencies, witness to the high degree of voluntarism that has emerged. Mission movements, following models of voluntary service and support from Western missions, have adopted the same strategy of using volunteers and encouraging unpaid engagement. Inter-denominational agencies are, for the most, 'faith missions'. Although some remuneration is provided for missionaries and for home staff, the financial commitment is low and depends on donations from churches and individuals. Both leadership and personnel on the fields have to trust God and the willingness of people to continue to support them. Denominational structures are in a slightly different situation with a stronger supporting base and usually higher salaries for their employees. The system, however, is still one of voluntarism both in the church base and in the sending process.

### **2.2.2. Growing economy and resources available for mission initiatives**

Despite being voluntary associations, mission movements need financial resources to function and grow. Brazil, Ghana and India are all developing countries with a significant percentage of the population considered to be poor. Evangelical churches have, in many cases, emerged among economically disfavoured classes. In India, most Evangelicals belong to lower castes or to the Dalits, the outcasts. In Ghana, although divisions in society are according to ethnic belonging and not necessarily economic status, few Evangelicals are affluent. Mainstream churches in Brazil have grown among

middle-class people and consequently have given denominations such as Presbyterians and Baptists a better financial basis for their initiatives. The strongest growth, nonetheless, is noted among Pentecostal groups, focusing on labouring classes and poor people. It is often women who are the first to convert, later bringing their husbands and the rest of the family. This is particularly seen in Pentecostal circles, probably owing to the fact that in many cases women are those who first seek help in situations of crisis. This means that even though local churches have a large number of members it does not signify that they are able to contribute larger amounts of money. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that a significant part of the missionary enterprise is linked to more traditional and mainstream churches that have had more of a gender balance and people from different social classes.

In this variety of situations, mission movements have emerged, some with many resources and others with big financial challenges. It is interesting that whether they have many resources or very few, mission organisations have improved their capacity for sending and supporting missionaries. The lack of money has many times been compensated by gifts in kind or voluntary service without any remuneration.<sup>12</sup> In more recent years, the slow enrichment of middle-class and urban churches, with involvement of businessmen and highly paid professionals, has influenced church economies and favoured initiatives such as the foundation of mission organisations. One example is the Antioch Mission in Brazil, which received from one businessman the resources to buy the land where the headquarters and training centre are established.

The growing number of evangelicals often compensates for the individual poverty of people in churches in rural and slum areas. When one local church does not have the

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<sup>12</sup> Williams, Theodore, 'Missions within a Context of Poverty' in Bush, Luis, ed., *Funding Third World Missions*, 1990:4

potential to support a missionary family on the field, the joint efforts of several churches make it possible. Partnerships with receiving churches and with international organisations have also been an important way of maintaining missionaries on the field and a basic support centre in the homeland. The international missionary consortium is a newer innovation that can help to finance mission enterprise.

There is no doubt, however, that the lack of financial resources is a major problem for NSCs, particularly for nations like Ghana and India where the growing economy has not generally favoured the ordinary person. Brazil's economy has developed in a different way and although many are still poor, the vast majority of the population has seen a significant improvement of their financial situation in the last decades. The average income per person in each country shows the disparity between the countries. According to the Population Reference Bureau, the GNI PPP per capita for 2005 was for Brazil US \$ 8,230, for Ghana US \$ 2,370 and for India US \$ 3,460, compared to the United Kingdom where the GNI PPP per capita was US \$ 32,690 and in the United States US \$ 41,950.<sup>13</sup> These figures show that Brazil has almost four times higher income per person than Ghana and more than twice that of India. However comparing to OSCs, Brazil has only 25% of the United Kingdom and 20% of the United States.

The economic situation in each country influences the viability of mission movements to engage cross-culturally and to maintain supporting structures for their missionaries. Nevertheless, the adjustment to these realities, such as guaranteeing only a partial income, has made it possible for mission organisations to send people and the tendency is that Evangelical churches will continue to grow in financial resources as well.

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<sup>13</sup> Gross National Income in Purchasing Power Parity (GNI PPP), Population Reference Bureau, [www.prb.org](http://www.prb.org), consulted August 30, 2007

### 2.2.3. Social, political and ecclesiastical factors

Among the external factors that have had an impact on the emergence of mission movements are social and political events and changes in each country. These could have either a direct or indirect effect in limiting or enabling mission activity when applied in general to all groups in society. One example of the latter would be the country's constitution, giving, for example, religious freedom to all citizens.

Related to mission movements, laws in Brazil prohibit non-Indians, and particularly non-Brazilians, from entering indigenous reservations without a specific invitation by a tribal chief and permission of FUNAI (the governmental indigenous department). This has created difficulties for mission organisations already working among Indian tribes and for others wishing to start missionary activity among them. These laws were promulgated in the 1980s owing to exploitation of natural resources by multinational companies in indigenous areas and some cases of offensive activities by mission organisations. In the attempt to protect native cultures and societies all 'foreign' presence was forbidden in some regions, including Catholic and Evangelical mission organisations working in tribal areas for more than fifty years. In other areas only Brazilian citizens have access to Indian tribes, which has caused a change in strategy by the missions replacing expatriates by Brazilian missionaries. A growing missionary activity is also seen among converted Indians, sending people to evangelise other indigenous tribes.

In Ghana (at that time Gold Coast) the effects of the outbreak of the First World War were felt among mission organisations with German missionaries who were expelled and had to be succeeded by nationals or, in some cases, by personnel from other countries. However it was primarily nationalistic feelings that changed the relationship

between emerging national churches and their mother missions in the West. Foreign missionaries were substituted by local leaders and the few missionaries who stayed received a new role to play under a national leadership.

Political factors in India have been even more influential in altering the situation for mission movements. The bills that were proposed and adopted initially in the state of Madhya Pradesh in the 1950s, and later extended to the whole country, limited the issue of visas for foreign missionaries and caused an almost complete moratorium from Western mission organisations. The result was a takeover of church leadership by nationals and an increase of local mission initiatives. It also sparked the development of national resources, seeking to compensate for the lack of external financing. New models had to be utilised that did not demand huge amounts of money and large investments in buildings and vehicles.

Nationalism has therefore played an important role in all three countries, and was particularly strong in the process of independence from their colonial masters and in the earlier days after obtaining freedom. This has influenced the development of Evangelical churches and consequently mission movements, particularly in the transition from foreign to national leadership.

A critical question related to political and legal factors in a country is the legality of mission activities. Should a mission organisation work strictly under the law even though official rules contradict common sense or a corrupt system profits from allegedly legal requirements? Until recently, one example of this was the ban on Brazilian missions transferring money to missionaries working in other countries. Creative ways of getting around this prohibition were developed and for many years mission



organisations had to work in a 'grey zone' of legality. The establishment of churches, or activities involving evangelisation activities, is forbidden in many countries where Evangelical missionaries work. The anti-conversion laws that have been promulgated in several Indian states in more recent years have limited the activities of mission organisations in the country and challenged the methods used for evangelisation. The answer given by many mission leaders, and missionaries, is that it is "more important to obey God than men", quoting the apostles John and Peter in Acts 5:29. The issue is however much more complicated and requires a careful case by case study in order to decide when it would be appropriate or even 'biblical' to go against the law of a specific country.

### **2.3. International Factors**

The international factors refer to the influence of global issues, trends, events and organisations upon the emergence of mission initiatives in a particular country. These factors are closely related to globalisation and the increasing inter-dependency between the nations of all continents.

#### **2.3.1. International exposure and contacts**

International exposure has decisively contributed to the emergence of mission movements in Brazil, Ghana and India. The fact that many Evangelical churches were originated by Western missions created a natural link between these countries and the sending countries in Europe and North America. These contacts were developed not only in ecclesiastical areas but also those related to education, cultural exchange, trade, relief programmes and business co-operation. Young people have been invited to study

in Western colleges and universities and volunteers from the West have stayed long and short term in social projects in Southern nations.

Facets of globalisation have also played an important part in the building up of relationships with other cultures, facilitating travel, information sharing, and fast communication between people worldwide. Sending and supporting missionaries have been eased by the opening up of economies and inclusion in international financial systems. A significant number of missionaries are professionals working as tent-makers for multi-national companies, in diplomatic roles, in sports or other areas.

The international contribution to the emergence of mission movements has come especially through conferences and the presentation of statistics and other information about the religious status in the world. Conferences may be just events without any connection to a wider process or they may have a major influence on the development of a missionary vision and involvement worldwide. One example is the COMIBAM conference in Brazil 1987 with participation of 3,200 delegates from all the Portuguese and Spanish speaking countries in Latin America and Europe. Alongside the encouragement of the gathering itself, a missiological concept was introduced and incorporated into the circle of Evangelical churches that were represented at the conference. The concept was that the time had come for the churches in the Global South to take their responsibility for the evangelisation of the world and be senders and not just receivers of missionaries.

Regarding Evangelical mission movements, congresses such as the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelisation in 1974 and its follow-up consultations, have had a strong influence on leaders and church organisations promoting cross-cultural mission. The

introduction of the term 'unreached people group' (UPG) and the discussions on holistic mission and contextualisation in mission gave new impetus to missionary involvement and promoted a deeper reflection on the role of the global church. Church leaders from the Global South were very much involved in the Lausanne conference and participated actively in the plenary presentations and in the elaboration of the Lausanne Covenant that came out of the event.<sup>14</sup> It was therefore natural that the main outcomes of the congress would spread to Africa, Asia and Latin America and regional conferences on world evangelisation be organised in these continents. The strong emphasis on reaching out with the Christian message to every nation and people group has ignited mission initiatives in many countries, influencing the way denominations and inter-denominational agencies have determined their strategies for outreach.

International movements such as World Evangelical Alliance and the Lausanne Movement have created high expectations for Evangelical churches in the Global South regarding their participation in world evangelisation, pushing for churches to establish mission organisations in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This pressure has certainly had both positive and negative effects. The fact that there is a recognition of mission potential among newer churches encourages initiatives and confirms, many times, the capacity of NSCs to be engaged in the worldwide missionary enterprise. On the other hand, the expectation has frequently resulted in impulsive and thoughtless mission adventures by churches and people who have not had the necessary knowledge and experience in sending out missionaries. The research done by the WEA Mission Commission on the attrition rate among missionaries, already mentioned in this study, clearly shows this reality.

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<sup>14</sup> Among these were Rene Padilla and Samuel Escobar from Latin America and Festo Kivengere from Africa

As in the case of Ghana, statistical material and new insights about the religious state of a country or a region have often caused a strong response from Evangelical churches. However, there is a negative side to that as well, especially when the missionary task is reduced to mere statistics. Mission movements have frequently stressed the numerical achievements in detriment to qualitative accomplishments, sacrificing the holistic approach to the receiving society. To reach a people group has often meant placing Christians within particular communities without being really committed to people's needs, just in order to reduce the number of unreached groups on the list. Unexpressed rivalry between mission movements, together with the compelling urgency of reaching out, has caused mission organisations in the Global South to engage in enterprises that they were not prepared for. Examples include the sending of people to remote areas without proper training and financial and logistic backing, and the acquisition of properties in foreign countries without the means for maintenance.

Today, mission leaders from NSCs are very much involved in the leadership of global networks and international organisations. It has become 'politically correct' to employ people from the Global South as directors of international missions. It is certainly a way of recognising the vital importance of the newer churches and a strategy to engage them more in world evangelisation. At the same time it gives the opportunity for people with new perceptions to influence the directions of Evangelical mission. The Lausanne conference is an example of this, and the developments on the international scene are today clearly marked by the increasing impact of NSCs. The mere fact that mission leaders participate in global events creates opportunities for sharing and learning, with an increasing understanding that those who come from growing churches should occupy the platforms.

### 2.3.2. Diasporic Groups

The move of people from one place to another has also been an important factor in the history of Christianity. Brazilian, Ghanaian and Indian diasporic groups are often main targets of mission movements from respective countries, owing to the ease of communicating the message and establishing churches among them. It is not rare for Evangelicals in diasporic groups to ask their home churches to send clergymen to work among them, which is considered a missionary activity by most mission movements. In some cases, it is the second generation of immigrants that start connecting with nationals, resulting in openness in the diaspora churches to those outside their own ethnic group. This occurs because the second generation is normally bilingual and inter-marriage is common.<sup>15</sup>

Within Europe, the potential of religious diasporic groups of Latin American, African and Asian origin is emphasised by Jenkins as one important element causing the growth of trans-national communities that particularly attract younger people.<sup>16</sup> The phenomenon is not exclusive to Christians but is equally seen in Muslim contexts. The strong belief that these groups have in the power of spiritual forces often gives the impression of fanaticism and, according to Jenkins, tends “to be anti-assimilative and to undermine factors that otherwise would contribute powerfully to secularisation”.<sup>17</sup>

From an historical perspective, Walls has highlighted the importance of diasporic groups for the spread of Christianity. Comparing the migration of Americans and Europeans that brought the Christian faith to countries in the Global South in earlier

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<sup>15</sup> This is seen, for example, among Latin American ethnic churches in the USA

<sup>16</sup> Jenkins, Philip, *God's Continent: Christianity, Islam and Europe's Religious Crisis*, 2007:96

<sup>17</sup> Jenkins 2007:97

centuries, he says that “the great new fact of our time – and it has momentous consequences for mission – is that the great migration has now gone into reverse”.<sup>18</sup>

One interesting example of the strength of the diasporic movement from the Global South is the Filipino International Network, organised in 1995 and described as “a catalytic movement of Christians committed to motivate and mobilize Filipinos globally to partner for worldwide mission”.<sup>19</sup> According to Min-Young Jung, the international coordinator of the Asian Diaspora Initiative, there are fifty to seventy million Chinese, twenty to thirty million Indians, eight to nine million people from the Philippines, six to seven million Koreans and three million Japanese living in diaspora.<sup>20</sup> Two aspects are stressed by Jung in relation to Asian diasporic groups. Firstly, the sociological understanding that people who have left their homeland are more open to the Gospel and therefore an important group to be targeted by evangelisation efforts. Secondly, that they could be of “great advantage for missions”, usually having “abundant human, financial and spiritual resources”.<sup>21</sup> Especially in the cases of Ghana and India, the diaspora has had the double role of creating opportunity for ministry in other countries and of providing funds for their home churches and missions. Immigrants living in other countries have often better financial conditions than they had in their homeland and are bound to family rules of sharing resources with more needy family members.

From a more analytical point of view, criticism could be made of the tendency to take advantage of people who have, for a variety of reasons, emigrated and are vulnerable to

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<sup>18</sup> Walls, Andrew, ‘Mission and Migration: The Diaspora Factor in Christian History’ in *Journal of African Christian Thought*, 5/3, 2002:10

<sup>19</sup> Tira, Sadiri Joy B., ‘Filipino International Network: A Strategic Model for Filipino Diaspora Global Missions’, in Pantoja, Luis, Saidiri Joy Tira and Enoch Wan (eds.), *Scattered: The Filipino Global Presence*, 2004:155,161

<sup>20</sup> Jung, Min-Young, ‘Asian Diaspora: Strategic Resource for World Mission’, in *Connections* 4/3, 2005:6

<sup>21</sup> Jung 2005:6

ideological and religious influences, particularly when made objects of evangelisation. On the other hand, any move to a new place will result in an encounter with new ideas and stimuli. The question, however, goes back to the whole discussion on conversion and the reasons why someone accepts a new religious orientation. Diasporic mission should of course not be despised or considered less valid than traditional cross-cultural mission. It has been a successful strategy in establishing churches in other cultures and building bridges into local communities that would not have been easily reached otherwise. It is also common that representatives of NSCs come from a diasporic background with the advantage of knowing their own culture and language as well as the international environment.

### **2.3.3. National associations and international co-operation**

National mission associations (AMTB, GEMA and IMA) have channelled mission-stimulus from outside, providing opportunities for national leaders to meet mission leaders from OSCs, consultations on cross-cultural issues, production of informative and educational materials and encouragement of international co-operation. These mission associations are closely linked to global networks such as WEA, resulting in mutual influence and sharing of information.

A common result of global gatherings and the activities promoted by these associations is the development of international co-operation ventures, focusing on specific regions of the world or kind of ministries. Strategic alliances directed towards the so-called 'unreached people groups', as mentioned in Chapter Two, include more and more organisations from NSCs and it is common today for older partnerships such as United Mission to Nepal and Association of Co-operation in Tunisia to open up their membership for NSCs' missions.

The internationalising of Evangelical mission movements is seen by mission leaders in Brazil, Ghana and India as an inevitable process and, in many cases, as a positive move. Nonetheless, there is a concern that the globalisation of mission enterprise hinders local creativity and initiatives to develop contextualised models for missionary work.

#### **2.4. The Synergic Combination of Factors**

It is quite obvious that the mere presence of these internal, external and international factors does not guarantee the emergence of mission movements. Even in contexts where several of these factors have been present, mission organisations have not necessarily developed in the same way as in Brazil, Ghana and India. This is the case in the Latin American countries of Uruguay, Paraguay and Bolivia, most of the French and Portuguese speaking countries in Africa and Japan and Indonesia in Asia. Each country has its own history and particular situation and the lack of mission initiatives could depend on the small size of the Evangelical churches, the political and economic situation of the country, civil wars or the destructive colonial heritage. When Evangelicalism is a clear minority in society, other factors could also hinder initiatives for example prohibition from evangelisation, persecution from majority groups, lack of financial resources, visa restrictions and isolation from international contacts.

Similar developments to those seen in Brazil, Ghana and India, are observed in countries such as Argentina, Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa, South Korea and the Philippines, just to mention two from each continent. In Argentina and Mexico the COMIBAM conference in 1987 had an important impact on Evangelical churches and their involvement in cross-cultural mission. In the case of Argentina, Davies points out that a series of national events in the 1980s, the creation of a co-operative effort of



mission initiatives called Misiones Mundiales, evangelistic campaigns and the emergence of national mission leaders resulted in a change of mindset and increased the level of interest in foreign missions.<sup>22</sup> In Mexico, it was at the COMIBAM conference in 1987 that a first committee of mission leaders was formed that eventually became COMIMEX (the Mexican Mission Committee). This association has united cross-cultural initiatives in the country. An important element in the development of mission organisations in Mexico has been the research into unreached people groups in and outside the country, generating information and awareness of the missionary task. The second COMIBAM conference was held in Acapulco in 1997 and, according to López, contributed to a stronger mobilisation of missionaries.<sup>23</sup>

In Nigeria, the mission movements that have emerged since the 1970s are very much linked to Charismatic revivals in the country. Most of the leaders of newer churches were Nigerians and, according to Ojo, indigenous Pentecostal movements started without interference from outside.<sup>24</sup> The influence, however, came from two international student organisations, the Student Christian Movements and the Christian Union, and their strong emphasis on evangelism and discipleship. Owing to the growth of Charismatic churches, mission movements emerged such as the Christian Missionary Foundation in 1982.<sup>25</sup> The Nigeria Evangelical Mission Association (NEMA) was organised in 1985 and five out of nine founding missions were Charismatic.<sup>26</sup> NEMA has been the major catalyst for autochthonous movements with a decisive contribution in making Nigeria the largest missionary sending country in Africa. The entrepreneurial

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<sup>22</sup> Davies, Paul, 'National Mission Movements – Case Studies – Argentina', in WEA Mission Commission, *Starting and Strengthening National Mission Movements*, 2001:7-9

<sup>23</sup> López, Moisés, 'La Historia de COMIMEX' [The History of COMIMEX], from the COMIMEX website – [www.comimex.org](http://www.comimex.org)

<sup>24</sup> Ojo, Matthews A., 'The Charismatic Movement in Nigeria Today', in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 19/3, 1995:114

<sup>25</sup> Ojo 1995:117

<sup>26</sup> Ojo, Matthews A., 'The Dynamics of Indigenous Charismatic Missionary Enterprises in West Africa', in Ezemadu, Reuben, ed., *Models, Issues and Structures of Indigenous Missions in Africa*, 2006:149

Nigerian leadership, national conferences and the development of African missiology have been important factors to explain the emergence and the growth of mission initiatives. In South Africa, it was mainly after the end of apartheid that national mission movements started to emerge. Crew mentions that church leaders started to meet and discuss how they could co-operate in mission, resulting in common efforts and the creation of the Southern Africa Missions Association in 1992.<sup>27</sup> National mission conferences, the hosting of the Global Conference on World Evangelisation in 1997 (GCOWE'97), production of mission materials and the involvement of black churches have been key aspects in the growing number of missionary initiatives in South Africa.

South Korea is today the second largest sending country of missionaries to other nations, only exceeded by the United States. According to Moon, the growth of mission movements in Korea is due mainly to five factors: "The evangelical theological orientation of the Korean churches, the explosive church growth in the 1960s and 1970s, the globalization of the Korean society, sacrificial giving of Korean Christians and the surplus of seminary graduates".<sup>28</sup> In the Philippines, Corpuz underlines the participation of Filipino delegates in a mission conference in Seoul in 1982, the first national mission consultation in 1983 with the formation of the Philippine Missions Association, the initiatives of national leaders and the partnership with mission organisations outside the Philippines as major incentives to the emergence and the development of mission movements in the country.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Crew, Willie, 'South Africa', in WEA Mission Commission, *Starting and Strengthening National Mission Movements*, 2001:59

<sup>28</sup> Moon, Steve Sang-Cheol, 'The Korean Missionary Movement and Leadership Issues', published by the Korea Research Institute for Missions in their website (krim.org), 2009:3. See also Moon, Steve, 'The Protestant Missionary Movement in Korea: Current Growth and Development', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 32/2, April 2008:60

<sup>29</sup> Corpuz, Rey, 'Philippines', in WEA Mission Commission, *Starting and Strengthening National Mission Movements*, 2001:55-56

These examples from other NSCs show that several of the internal, external and international factors have been present, resulting in autochthonous mission movements and that Brazil, Ghana and India are not unique in that sense. When most of the factors are present, the probability of mission initiatives appearing is very high, as seen in the studied countries. It is, however, the synergic combination of these factors that most likely produces mission movements. Some of the factors are certainly more important than others and need to be there. Others, such as financial resources, could be compensated for by support from outside or using different models of structures that do not demand the same degree of investment as traditional Western missions. Those that are indispensable are the ones that generate intentionality in organising mission movements and these are:

- A clear motivation for mission that either consists of a sophisticated theology of mission or the perception of obligation and advantage in engaging in mission, as seen during this study;
- In the case of NSCs, the change of mindset from being receivers to senders. This new attitude is often the result of a process that starts with the participation in international conferences or through other international contacts, enabling church leaders to see the potential for mission in their churches;
- An entrepreneurial leadership that has the courage to break with old traditions and take responsibility for developing a sending mission structure, frequently encouraged by political and economic trends in society; and,
- The establishment of a structure appropriate to the churches wishing to be involved in mission. For the most part this structure will be based on voluntarism and follow basic patterns of voluntary associations.

### **3. Characteristics of Evangelical Mission Movements**

Owing to the synergy of internal, external and international factors, mission movements have emerged in the studied NSCs that demonstrate various similarities and differences in the way they are founded and organised. A comparison of the main characteristics of these mission movements is given below in order to highlight the major trends in NSCs.

#### **3.1. Organisational Models**

Two basic models of mission organisations, in relation to ecclesiastical structures, are seen in all three countries, denominational mission structures and inter-denominational mission agencies. Denominations can involve a continuation of foreign mission efforts, which generally leads to similar mission structures as seen in the cases of the Brazilian Baptist Convention, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana and the Church of South India. In denominations that have come out of national initiatives without links to a foreign mission, such as the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (IURD) in Brazil and the India Pentecostal Church of God, the structure is very much adapted to local circumstances and innovative ways of financing their activities. According to their ecclesiastical traditions, denominational mission structures are governed by boards and executive directors elected in general assemblies. Newer Pentecostal and Independent churches may have more centralised governance, sometimes around a charismatic leader who founded the church, which is the case of the IURD in Brazil.

Inter-denominational agencies tend to follow the 'faith missions' model, emphasising voluntarism and dependence on God's provision. Being, in most cases, younger organisations, governance is often exercised by one person or a small leadership team,

as seen in the Torchbearers in Ghana and the National Fellowship of India. In older agencies, such as the Antioch Mission in Brazil and Christian Outreach Fellowship in Ghana, the general assembly is the highest governance body, electing the board and the executives of the mission. International inter-denominational agencies follow usually a globalised model, commonly with the appointment of its leadership through an international board, as in the cases of Operation Mobilisation and WEC International.

It is difficult to predict the life cycle of these different models and the history of mission movements in Brazil, Ghana and India are not long enough to see clear trends, particularly related to inter-denominational movements. However, some of the mission agencies have already gone through phases of development, leaving the initial stage of strong growth and entering into a stage of stability and even some stagnation in the number of missionaries. A critical point for any mission movement is the transition from the first generation of leaders, often represented by one charismatic and visionary founder, to the second generation. The tendency seems to be for the mission organisation to go through a series of modifications towards a more robust structure in order to survive and compensate for the usually less charismatic leadership. The result is that the re-structured organisation demands more resources, both in terms of personnel and finances, frequently hindering numeric growth. In some case there is a search for new strategies of fund-raising, leading to entrepreneurial initiatives and often stretching the concepts of voluntarism and of philanthropy. In the studied countries, several of the mission movements have stabilised in respect to the number of mission fields and of missionaries, not seeing significant growth in the last ten years. The question is whether the existing mission movements in these three countries, both denominational and inter-denominational, have reached a limit in their sending capacity to the extent new organisations can contribute to a growth in the number of missionaries going out.

### 3.2. Leadership Styles

Regardless of the way people assume power positions in mission movements, leadership style is generally linked to cultural background. By and large the tendency in Latin America, Africa and Asia is to recognize male charismatic and entrepreneurial leaders, as seen in the discussion on leadership styles in Chapter Three. Although cultural values in these societies would expect emphasis on working together, the leadership models in government, particularly in Brazil and Ghana, tend towards authoritarianism, many times emulated by mission leaders.

Democratisation processes have, however, also influenced mission movements and people in general demand an increasing participation in decision making. Certainly the accepted leadership style also depends on the social context in which the mission movement is founded. People with higher education and positions of responsibility in society expect to be involved in the procedures adopted by an organisation. This is clearly evident in student movements and mission agencies emerging in academic circles such as WEC International and Christian Outreach Fellowship.

Entrepreneurialism characterises the leadership of the studied mission movements and is, as already affirmed, one of the main factors and requirements for starting mission organisations. Especially in situations where there is not much of a missionary tradition, as in NSCs, the capacity to initiate and develop sending structures is highly necessary. Authoritarian leadership may demonstrate this kind of power to initiate but it does not always last. Besides being initiators, entrepreneurial leaders are often good in delegating responsibilities and strategists in creating a sustainable enterprise. It is certainly this kind of leadership that has been successful in mission movements in NSCs.

As the mission movements in NSCs develop, a new kind of leadership is certainly needed in order to secure the continuity of these organisations. In line with changes in legislation, the requirements of those involved, such as missionaries, employees and voluntary staff, are constantly being increased, demanding new skills of the leadership and a more professional management of the organisation. A team leadership is often the solution for these higher demands, which, on the other hand, leads to new pressures. Therefore, the training of mission leaders is today as important as the training of mission candidates. With few exceptions, however, most of the leaders running mission movements in NSCs have not had the opportunity for specific education related to their role.

### **3.3. National or Foreign Mission**

Differences in religious contexts explain the various ways in which Evangelical mission movements have developed their strategies and chosen their main target areas. For Brazilian Evangelical churches the strong presence in the country has led to a greater focus on other nations. The original indigenous tribes have been reduced to small communities, often of just a few hundred, and are targeted by specialised mission organisations. However, for the majority of the denominations the limited return does not motivate bigger investments among the 350 indigenous groups still existing in Brazil.

In the case of Ghana, the tribal system continues to be important and the majority of people are divided by language and ethnicity. Group solidarity is strong and evangelistic enterprises are often directed towards people of the same ethnic and linguistic roots. Growing churches in the Accra region send missionaries to work among compatriots in

the north or in neighbouring countries. The diasporic element is shown both in the fact that the migrants from the north who came to the south of Ghana and converted to Christianity are now returning to their former lands preaching the Gospel, and in mission strategy towards diasporic groups outside the country.

For Evangelicals in India the challenge is huge to reach out to all the different castes, religious and ethnic groups that form Indian society. It is therefore not surprising that 99% of Evangelical missionaries focus on the sub-continent. The emphasis on reaching out to all regions within their own country is partly due to the initial teaching of foreign missionaries working in these countries and their emphasis on establishing national churches. Most of the newer churches have centred around evangelism and church-planting initiatives. For many of the denominations in NSCs this is still their main function and cross-cultural mission, particularly in other countries, is more the exception rather than the rule. Inter-denominational movements have played an important role in providing sending structures for mission candidates wanting to go abroad and in many cases this has been done in co-operation with denominational boards. Using the language of the two church structures mentioned in Chapter Three, the 'modality' has often benefited from the 'sodality' in fulfilling its missionary task.

Despite good collaboration between denominational and inter-denominational organisations, there has been tension between the two types of structures. Denominations have criticised mission agencies of stealing personnel and draining the churches of financial resources. Inter-denominational organisations have, for their part, accused denominations and churches of not being enough involved in cross-cultural mission and lacking vision for larger investment in the missionary enterprise.



### **3.4. Types of Ministries**

A similarity in the three countries is that the primary focus of mission movements is evangelism and church planting, as opposed to educational, health-related and other social activities. Support to existing local churches is also high on the priority list, particularly in the case of denominational organisations. For inter-denominational missions an important part of their ministry is to train national leaders, often serving other ecclesiastical organisations as well.

Social projects are thus still embryonic but often part of missionary strategy and a growing ministry among most of the newer mission movements. The tendency is for denominational missions to invest in institutional structures such as schools, orphanages and hospitals, while inter-denominational agencies focus more on short term and limited projects such as vocational courses, community development and distribution of food and clothes. There is no doubt, however, that holistic mission is gaining terrain among Evangelical movements and most organisations include a holistic approach to the missionary task both in their motivation for doing mission and in their practical strategy. Traditional missionary activities such as Bible translation, publication of religious literature and Bible distribution are often the responsibility of specific organisations, working as support ministries to the sending missions.

### **3.5. Financing Cross-Cultural Mission**

As seen in earlier discussions, finances are a major concern for most mission movements in NSCs. Reliant upon voluntary donations, mission organisations tend to overestimate their capacity to promote their work and generate funds and unrealistic

budgets are often approved. The element of 'faith' is seen in this, expecting God's provision for the shortage of resources. Denominational structures have, in general, a better economy since they can count on the fidelity of affiliated congregations. Inter-denominational agencies that do not have a strong relation to local churches often struggle to maintain promised salaries and logistical support to their missionaries.

Of the three countries, Brazil has the best economic situation, which is also required for sending people to other countries and continents. Most of the Ghanaian and Indian missionaries are working within their respective countries, receiving small amounts of support from the sending organisation. Partnerships with international mission organisations, with foundations in the West and with receiving churches, have facilitated the maintenance of personnel on mission fields, particularly in the cases of Ghana and India. Diasporic groups have also contributed to mission outreach in their original homeland or supported missionaries to work among them.

A growing concern with correct administration of financial resources and accountability systems has been raised by the co-operative mission associations in these countries, and they have developed codes of good practice, giving guidance to affiliated organisations regarding administrative issues. This is a response to increasing requirements from the governments as well as from supporting churches and individuals. At the same time, the continuity and future viability of mission movements in NSCs demand stronger financial structures, solving issues related particularly to the support needed by missionaries living abroad.

The booming economy of Brazil and India will undoubtedly produce a better financial situation for churches and mission movements and consequently the possibility of more

investment in cross-cultural mission. A decisive issue, however, is how much Evangelicals in NSCs will prioritise cross-cultural mission in the future or follow the trends in OSCs of stabilisation or of diminishing interest for mission.

### **3.6. Measuring Success**

Mission movements tend to measure success by the number of converts, new churches, mission fields and missionaries. In some cases, however, other parameters are used, such as confirmed changes in a local community concerning infrastructure, schooling, health situation and democratic participation. Generally, missionaries and mission organisations feel pressurised to present measurable results, in order to justify the investment by individual donors, local churches and foundations. In the case of the IURD in Brazil the continuation of a missionary work depends on fast results in terms of converts and monetary income. In most cases, however, mission organisations expect their missionaries to achieve results over a longer term.

The survival and sustainability of mission movements in NSCs could be seen as a success in itself. The mere fact that they can continue functioning and keeping missionaries in cross-cultural contexts, despite fighting economic constraints and competing with more affluent movements from OSCs, should be considered an achievement. As stated in the introduction to this thesis, the viability of mission organisations in the Global South has been questioned, owing to high rates of attrition of personnel and shortage of funds to provide the benefits usually experienced by missionaries from OSCs. However, an increasing number of missionaries from NSC are remaining in cross-cultural ministry and the sending missions have gradually improved their conditions. The greatest success in this case has been the ability to found

contextualised mission models that give the necessary support to volunteers and providing the levels of assistance and care needed by Latin American, African and Asian missionaries.

Another measurable success is the degree of contextualisation that takes place when mission movements from NSCs start projects and establish churches in receiving countries. The fact that NSCs have gone through the experience of being the object of mission efforts from OSCs, and often reacted against imposition of foreign models in their own country, does not necessarily result in a better handling of contextualisation issues in new cultures. There is, however, a growing concern among NSCs with the export of their own ecclesiastical systems and an increasing co-operation between sending missions and receiving churches on the mission fields has contributed to greater respect for cultural contexts and opportunities for missionaries to learn alongside local people.<sup>30</sup>

#### **4. Brief comparison between NSCs and OSCs**

Several times during this study the statement has been made that Evangelical mission movements in NSCs tend to emulate models from OSCs. There is, however, ambivalence towards OSCs, with both a desire to copy their models and search for new forms of mission structures. Having been successful in implementing Christianity all

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<sup>30</sup> One example is the co-operation between COMIBAM in Latin America and MANI in Africa and the agreement to receive and train missionaries in the local context. Bianchi, Daniel, [www.comibam.org/docs/reunionconosur\\_es.pdf](http://www.comibam.org/docs/reunionconosur_es.pdf). Another example is the 'Welcome Project' promoted by the European Evangelical Mission Alliance, facilitating the connection between missionaries coming to Europe and local churches and offering training in the local context. Van der Wilden, Kees, 'Issues Facing Mission to Europe from a Colonial Perspective – The Welcome Project' in *Connections*, Special Edition on Europe, 2006:22-24

over the world, mission structures from Europe and North America are often seen as ideal prototypes for any mission organisation and it is natural that replication occurs. These are also the forms that churches established by foreign missions are familiar with and the kind of sending structures that their denominational tradition values. The Brazilian Baptist Convention is a good example of a church that has structured their missionary work in the same way as the mother mission, the Southern Baptists in the United States. This is true for most of the other denominational mission organisations studied in these three countries.

Despite great similarities between newer mission movements in the global South and their predecessors in the North, there are important differences, owing to varied economic and social conditions. Generally, mission structures in NSCs are not as sophisticated and developed as those in OSCs with decades or even centuries of existence and experience. NSCs' missions usually resemble mission organisations in OSCs in their pioneer stage. National labour laws require different standards in each country and the situation of volunteers varies greatly from place to place. In the previously mentioned REMAP I and REMAP II studies, a clear difference between OSCs and NSCs is shown when dealing with member care and social security issues. Mission organisations in OSCs invest far more resources in order to provide security and support for their missionaries on the field. Although striving to reach the same level of assistance to missionaries, missions in NSCs often fail, due to lack of finances.

Far from being confined to questions of finance, mission movements in NSCs still emphasise voluntarism and sacrifice as crucial virtues for those who want to be missionaries. Mirroring monastic and courageous pioneering missionaries, Brazilians, Ghanaians and Indians often leave their homelands with a one-way ticket without any

assurance that they will ever return. David Ruiz, leader of COMIBAM for ten years, affirms that while missionaries from OSCs generally know how long their period on the field will be and which project they will work with, missionaries from NSCs often do not know.<sup>31</sup>

More recently the pressure on mission organisations has increased in NSCs and particularly well-educated candidates demand different treatment and security plans for their engagement in cross-cultural work. The internationalisation process and growing numbers of global partnerships are influencing these changes. When people from NSCs join the same organisation as personnel from OSCs, disparities in support have to be discussed and dealt with. Ruiz sees a higher degree of flexibility among missionaries from NSCs in adjusting to local conditions, compared to their colleagues from OSCs who tend to reproduce on the mission field similar structures of security and of facilities to those in their homelands. Missionaries from NSCs are not in the position to do this and do not require the same guarantees.<sup>32</sup>

Mission movements in NSCs have, of course, the advantage of learning from the mistakes and the developments of missions in OSCs. The whole area of contextualisation is a good example. This does not mean that emerging missions will not make mistakes but rather that they have theoretically the possibility of avoiding major pitfalls in cross-cultural contexts. As seen in earlier discussions, missiologists in NSCs frequently criticise Western missions that have come to their countries for lack of contextualisation, difficulties in handing over leadership to nationals and imposition of Western theology and ecclesiastical models. In spite of that criticism and apparent

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<sup>31</sup> Ruiz, David, personal interview, May 23, 2009

<sup>32</sup> Ruiz, personal interview 2009

awareness of the danger of inflicting foreign customs, newer mission movements have often replicated the same errors.<sup>33</sup>

Explicit and implicit motives drive mission organisations in NSCs as in OSCs. Although there are indigenous theologies of mission that have stimulated missiological reflection, as seen in earlier chapters, the explicit motives mentioned by mission leaders in NSCs tend to be the same as in Western missions. Love and compassion for people considered to be lost and far from God, obedience to Biblical mandates, conversion of people to the Christian faith, establishment and expansion of churches and eschatological urgency (particularly in reaching out to all ethnic groups before the second coming of Jesus Christ) are all motives for mission engagement. Humanitarian concern based on holistic theology is almost equally important, although in practice social projects are often used for evangelisation purposes. Trade and cultural exchange were not mentioned in any of the interviews or written materials provided by the mission organisations studied. The link between the three 'Cs', commerce, civilisation and Christianity, is no longer relevant. On the other hand, missions employ professionals who move to other countries for study and jobs. These so-called 'tent-makers' have generally easier access to local population and are often very effective in planting churches.

'Manifest destiny' was an important factor in missionary work done by Roman Catholic missions such as exemplified by the Portuguese who came to Brazil, Ghana and India, as well as mission initiatives from Europe and the United States. The sense of being destined and commissioned to 'save the world' can also be seen in Evangelical mission

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<sup>33</sup> See, for example, discussion on Brazilian missions in Portugal in Ekström, Bertil, 'The Selection Process and the Issue of Attrition: Perspective of the New Sending Countries' in Taylor, William, (ed.), *Too Valuable to Lose – Exploring the Causes and Cures of Missionary Attrition*, 1997:188

movements in NSCs. The Mission Statements of most mission organisations, often based on Biblical texts, denote the whole world as the target of missionary activity and have the clear objective of converting ‘all nations’ to the Christian faith. Certainly the practical application of this is rather different from that of colonial powers and earlier empires, excluding any methodology that would use violence or military occupation. Any ‘conquest’ should be seen in spiritual terms, focusing on a confrontation with other religious beliefs.

Another implicit motive identified in NSCs is the sense of romantic feelings and adventure, especially among young people who have the desire to discover the world. For many of them, especially from poorer contexts, mission gives a unique opportunity to travel and to interact with other cultures. Participation in international teams such as those organised by Operation Mobilisation or Youth with a Mission, provides such opportunities and a growing number of short-term missionaries from NSCs apply for these experiences. Closely linked to this is the yearning for being a global citizen or at least being part of an international community, visible in the fast growth of worldwide charismatic movements. There seems, however, to be a difference between how short term mission is seen in NSCs compared to OSCs. While in NSCs, short term involvement is considered an opportunity for cross-cultural training, in OSCs short term mission is generally a first step towards long term commitment. Today in Brazil, Ghana and India, young people are globally connected through the internet, which results often in increasing interest for travel and meeting other cultures. Mission movements make use of the internet for mobilising and challenging people to engage in missionary activities, knowing the power of that medium, particularly among the youth.



Unlike the situation regarding mission movements in OSCs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, imperialism and colonialism are no longer important motives for mission, whether in NSCs or in OSCs. However, imperialistic attitudes can be detected in some situations when missionaries act based on ethnocentrism and cultural superiority, especially when working among tribal groups. Massive investments in buildings, projects and employment of people cause, in general, dependence on foreign resources and create a paternalistic relationship with national leaders. This has sometimes been called 'new-colonialism' since it generates external intervention in local affairs and continuous dependency on other nations. Although Brazil, Ghana and India are not known for conquering other lands and making them their colonies, the size and growing influence of Brazil and India in particular could easily lead to imposition on others of their political, economic and even religious systems. Without direct connections to governments or commercial powers, Evangelical mission movements are certainly not so powerful that they could produce this kind of nationwide dependency. Nonetheless, in their relationship to national churches the situation can occur as seen in some missionary activities of Brazilians in the neighbouring countries of Paraguay, Bolivia and Peru.

Although the official discourse is no longer that mission should impose a specific ideology on receiving cultures, there is still a tendency among missionaries from OSCs to include political elements, such as democratisation and gender issues in their projects, as important values to be transmitted. By and large, missionaries from NSCs do not have the same concern. This difference in opinion regarding what should be translated is evident in the way that mission organisations from OSCs constantly try to answer the question of what they can offer to people where they work, while their fellow

organisations from NSCs look more for local resources and partnerships with receiving churches and communities.<sup>34</sup>

The diasporic factor plays a significant role in NSCs as it did in the mission history of OSCs. Migration of Europeans and Americans to Brazil was an important way of establishing the first Evangelical churches in the early nineteenth century. Communities for trade posts and commerce formed by Europeans were the initial embryo for Protestant churches in Ghana and India. In the case of Brazilians, Ghanaians and Indians, diasporic groups in the North have attracted missionaries from these countries to work among them, and this makes up a significant part of cross-cultural activity of mission movement. People who have migrated to affluent nations are also important contributors to the financial support of mission organisations in their homeland.

Looking at the type of work engaged in by missionaries sent out by Evangelical mission movements in NSCs, it is interesting to notice that there is a strong emphasis on pioneer work such as evangelisation in unreached areas and church planting, while mission organisations in OSCs tend to prioritise support activities like theological training, bible translation and relief projects. The selection of candidates in NSCs also shows a focus on the ability to plant churches, requiring previous experience of ministry in local churches. In OSCs pre-field formal higher education is seen as more important than ministry practice.<sup>35</sup> For many NSCs, pre-field training emphasises the survival on the field in the battle against other religions and spiritual forces, while in OSCs the training focuses more on efficiency and good results. Therefore, failure is often considered by

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<sup>34</sup> Ruiz, personal interview 2009

<sup>35</sup> Hay, Rob et al., *Worth Keeping – Global Perspectives on Best Practice in Missionary Retention*, 2007:69,70

those in NSCs as spiritual weakness, while in OSCs it tends to be seen as lack of good planning and efficiency.

Historically, mission schools played a decisive role in the translation process of Christianity from OSCs, being an important strategy to educate generations of national leaders with a Christian ideology. In NSCs, schools have not had the same priority with the exception of biblical and theological education. One reason for this could be that missions from OSCs have had an institutionalised concept of the Church, focusing on buildings, related institutions (such as schools, hospitals, etc.) and administration, while missions from NSCs have focused more on people and the building of local communities without being concerned about formal structures. There are certainly advantages and disadvantages in both models. Institutions created by OSCs tend to be costly and difficult for local churches to take over without financial dependency from abroad. On the other hand, these institutions have frequently contributed to community development, qualitative educational systems and an overall positive influence of the Christian church in society.

An interesting question is how the development of mission movements in NSCs affects OSCs and the worldwide mission enterprise. Apart from the statistical verification that there are today as many cross-cultural missionaries from NSCs as they are from OSCs, which in itself changes the global scenario related to Evangelical missions, the impact of the emergence of newer mission movements in the Global South has been enormous on the whole missionary endeavour. Examples include:

- A renewed emphasis on evangelism and church planting;

- New models of international co-operation with NSCs offering personnel and OSCs supporting financially;
- The role of diasporic groups as bridges into non-Christian contexts and for the so-called re-evangelisation of Europe and North America;
- South-south collaboration between mission movements in the Global South reaching out to ‘unreached people groups’;
- New models of sending structures based on voluntarism and bi-vocational missionaries. These recreate the ‘faith mission model’ used by OSCs in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, with limited support guaranteed by the sending structure. In some cases, the funding for salaries and necessities is provided by receiving churches or other organisations on the mission field. In other situations, the missionaries have secular jobs that supply their financial needs.

## Conclusion

This chapter has compared the translation process in Brazil, Ghana and India and discussed the validity of applying the translatability principle to the emergence of mission movements in these countries. Although the translatability principle helps to elucidate the background to churches and organisations that have given birth to mission initiatives, it does not provide enough evidence as to the significant growth of missions in NSCs. Alongside with the legacy from missionary efforts from OSCs, Evangelical churches in NSCs have been influenced by other internal as well as external and international factors, resulting in the emergence and development of mission organisations. The combination of these factors has produced a favourable environment

for mission movements to develop, with an increasing participation of NSCs in the worldwide mission enterprise. It is, however, difficult to determine the degree of importance of each of the contributing factors since situations are so diverse in every cultural context. Nevertheless, some of these factors are more relevant than others, particularly those that create intentionality in the missionary engagement and provoke initiatives that lead to the founding of mission organisations. The fact that the same internal, external and international factors are found in other NSCs that have had a similar expansion of mission movements in the last four decades as Brazil, Ghana and India, indicates the validity of analysing the emergence and the development of mission movements in any NSC based on these contributing factors.

The comparison between OSCs and NSCs shows that there are many aspects in common as well as practical differences in the way that missionary work is carried out. Although the mindset in the Global South is more of co-operation and adjustment to local realities on the mission fields, most of the motives identified in OSCs are also present in NSCs. Financial constraints also influence the way NSCs establish their churches in receiving contexts, focusing more on people than on institutions, and with a higher dependence on local resources.

The participation of mission movements from NSCs on the worldwide mission enterprise is growing and the impact caused by their generally audacious strategies shapes Evangelical mission today. The self-missionising initiatives give continuity to the spiral of expansion of Christianity with a new translation process, now based on contextualised movements originated in NSCs. 'Mission fields have become mission forces', and some of the consequences of this are described in the concluding chapter.

## **CHAPTER 8 - CONCLUSION**

### **THE NEW MISSION FORCE**

The objective of this study has been to identify key factors that are decisive for the emergence of Evangelical mission movements in particular countries in the Global South. This last chapter includes final conclusions regarding the research, reaffirming the relevance of the contributing factors. The viability and the global role of mission initiatives in NSCs are also commented upon, and some recommendations for further research are made. The chapter concludes by stating the importance and contribution of this thesis to the area of Mission Studies.

#### **Introduction**

A new mission force has emerged in the Global South from the 1970s onwards. Mission fields have become mission forces and a new epoch of Christian mission has been inaugurated. Christianity is more globalised than ever and is present in all nations. Evangelical mission today goes from everywhere to everywhere and the traditional concepts of sending and receiving countries are outdated. Statistics may not give a completely accurate picture of the percentage of cross-cultural missionaries going out from NSCs, but clearly show this trend. The growing churches in the Global South have decisively entered into world evangelisation and recuperated much of the missionary fervour seen in the Global North in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century.

This research has based its conclusions on a combination of elements such as statistical material, publication from mission organisations, interviews with mission executives, mission literature and my personal interaction with cross-cultural mission over more than thirty years. Although consideration has been given to statistics on the growth of mission initiatives in NSCs, the qualitative investigation to identify the key factors that have significantly contributed to the emergence of mission movements has been founded primarily on the statements of mission leaders of these newer mission organisations. An important objective, therefore, has been to give voice to those who have not been heard so far and to reduce the imbalance in mission history that has, traditionally, described the transmission of Christianity almost exclusively from a Western perspective.<sup>1</sup>

My main thesis is that the emergence of newer mission movements in traditional receiving countries is a result both of a translation process of mission models from OSCs and of autochthonous initiatives, made possible by a combination of specific internal, external and international factors. These factors are identifiable and can be used as parameters for evaluating the start, progress and effectiveness of any mission movement in NSCs.

The study demonstrates that in the translation of Christianity into receiving cultures, not only were church models transmitted alongside the Christian message, but also a form of missionary motivation, which has served as the initial stimulus for the expansion of national churches. This motivation has been characterised mainly by inherited theological doctrines affirming the need for people to convert to the Christian faith and

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<sup>1</sup> Compare with Allan Anderson's attempt to write the story of Early Pentecostalism "from the perspective of the recipients of the Pentecostal message as much as possible". *Spreading the Fire: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism*, 2007:9

the expectation that the church members in the emerging churches should engage in evangelistic efforts and missionary activity.

Mission movements in the Global South are voluntary associations, like the Western mission organisations.<sup>2</sup> Although the influence of imported models is clear, mission organisations in NSCs have developed their own ways of doing mission according to local conditions. The tendency in the newer churches has been, however, to focus primarily on local communities and to develop a bureaucratic organisation for perpetuation and maintenance, following the same pattern as the missionaries who planted them. Factors other than the foreign legacy have also contributed to this tendency among mission movements in the NSCs. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that changes have occurred among Evangelical churches in OSCs, while newer mission movements have emerged that have adapted to changing global circumstances.

On the one hand, some contributing factors are closely related to the contextualisation processes in relation to Evangelicalism. These are linked to the capacity for translation and the progressive contextualisation of Christianity in the respective countries, and to the gradual transformation of foreign mission models into contextualised types of missionary sending structures. On the other hand, other factors are directly associated with local developments and the context in which these mission movements have emerged. As seen in this study, the level of adaptation and contextualisation of the Christian faith has differed significantly between the so-called mission fields, with notably less success in some cultures than in others, as seen in India. Nevertheless,

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<sup>2</sup> For the different definition and dimensions of voluntarism, see Introduction in Chapter Three



Christian churches have been established in most countries, providing basic conditions for the emergence of mission initiatives, as discussed in Chapter One.

In the endeavour of translating the Christian faith to other continents, Western missions played a decisive role, as described in Chapter Two. The effort of foreign missionaries to adapt Christian doctrines and practices to receiving cultures was frequently problematic owing to their lack of knowledge of local religions and worldviews. The contextualisation of Christianity has therefore been a slow process, led mainly by converted nationals. The search for cultural appropriate expressions of the new faith has implied, for the most part, an enormous challenge. Over a period of time, local people have contextualised Christianity, creating new forms and models for expressing their faith. The contextualisation process has been rooted in the life and experience of the emerging church in dialogue with its local context and not as a product of a top-down imposition. The self-initiated missionising process in NSCs is a continuation of the expansion of Christianity, creating a spiral effect of translation, contextualisation, self-missionising and further translation.

The change of mindset in NSCs, from being receivers to being senders of missionaries, has created a new momentum in the history of Evangelical mission from the 1970s onwards. Autochthonous mission movements have appeared in many countries in the Global South. The discovery that ‘the task is also ours’ and that ‘we can also do it’ has been recognised by a number of mission leaders in NSCs as a turning point in their understanding of their role in world evangelisation. Cross-cultural mission has become also a concern for newer churches and a shared responsibility with churches in OSCs. It is certainly surprising the way mission movements in NSCs have developed in such a short period, today representing basically half of the global Evangelical mission force.

## **1. Contributing Factors to the Emergence of Mission Movements**

During this study, the expansion of mission initiatives in NSCs has been described and evaluated. Using Brazil as the starting point for the discussion, internal, external and international factors have been identified as determining the emergence of Evangelical mission movements. These factors have been ‘verified’ in Ghana and India, demonstrating the extent to which they are applicable to other contexts than the Brazilian one. Although important differences exist between the countries, the presence of these factors shows that they are valuable tools for analysing the conditions for the birth and the development of any mission movement. However, the mere existence of the factors does not necessarily lead to autochthonous mission movements. It is the degree of synergy between internal, external and international factors that provokes the emergence of mission initiatives and the viability of these to survive and develop.

Although useful and applicable in most NSCs, the ways in which these factors are applied may differ from country to country. Depending on the availability of information and length of mission engagement, important trends can be identified. In cases where mission organisations in a particular country have had just a few years of existence, it can be difficult to verify consistent trends. Some of these factors are intrinsic to the expansion of Christianity and quite obvious in places where there are established Evangelical churches, for example church growth. Others will be found in countries in the Global South where Evangelicalism has seen a strong growth and where there is a mindset geared towards voluntarism among church members, making resources available. The decisive factors are therefore those that denote intentionality and that, brought together in a deliberate way, create a favourable ambience for mission initiatives, as affirmed in Chapter Seven.

An important issue is how aware mission leaders in NSCs are of these factors. As seen in the analysis of each country, there is more consciousness regarding internal and international than of external factors (those related to society). Knowing that some Evangelical circles have been predisposed to isolate themselves from the secular world outside the Church, it is not a surprise that these factors are not mentioned. On the other hand, the political, economic and social influences are so strong in hindering or favouring mission initiatives that it is surprising that so few see the correlation between society and mission growth. Spiritual factors, such as God's action through the Holy Spirit and the divine vocation to mission, are considered by many of the interviewed leaders to be more important and critical. In the analysis based on the above factors, these spiritual aspects have only been included as part of declared motives for doing mission, owing to their subjective character.<sup>3</sup>

## **2. Viability and Role of NSCs' Mission Movements**

The viability of mission movements in NSCs has sometimes been questioned owing to their supposed lack of experience and of financial resources, as stated in Chapter One. The REMAP I and REMAP II studies show that the attrition rates are higher in NSCs than in OSCs but also that a significant improvement has taken place during the time between the two surveys.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, there are concerns that the often optimistic investment in mission does not always have a sufficient support system or the stability needed for long-term engagement overseas. Political instability, financial crises and visa

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<sup>3</sup> Describing religious phenomena and spiritual factors are, of course, important. In this study, however, the choice has been to not analyse these factors as decisive to the emergence of mission movements, and rather to focus primarily on more objective and 'scientific' factors that can be compared and evaluated. Spirituality has influence on Christian voluntarism, as seen in Church history, as well as on the motivation for doing mission, as discussed in Chapter Two, Section 2

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 40 in Chapter One

problems have affected some missions in NSCs and the number of missionaries has decreased, at least temporarily, as seen in the statistics in Chapter One. In other cases, discontinuity of support by local churches, lack of effective pre-field training and difficulties in adjusting to receiving cultures have been significant reasons for missionaries returning prematurely to their home country.

On the other hand, there are many examples of mission movements in NSCs that demonstrate sustainability, as seen in the case studies. Clearly the tendency is towards growth in the quantity of mission organisations and in the overall number of missionaries. Inter-denominational mission agencies may, however, stagnate when reaching their administrative capacity, being also more sensitive to financial fluctuations in society. There is a big challenge involved in restructuring the agency, particularly if it has been led by a visionary founder for many years. The level of loyalty by local churches and individuals towards an inter-denominational agency is usually lower than that seen in denominational missions. This is because participation is voluntary, without the compelling obligation that denominations generally place on affiliated churches and members. Denominational structures thus have the propensity to grow in the same proportion to membership and in financial strength.

An issue that this observation raises is the degree of freedom to participate in each model. Although the individual member in most cases is not forced to contribute financially to the local church, the agreement between the congregation and the denomination is that the church is expected to participate in collaborative programmes and transfer a fixed percentage of its income to the denominational account. In the case of inter-denominational agencies the contribution from churches and individuals is frequently determined by support to specific missionaries or time-limited projects.

When the supported missionaries return or the project has been completed, the continuity of contribution to the mission can not be taken for granted.

Combined with financial issues, the personal sacrifice of those who go out as missionaries through sending organisations in NSCs is reminiscent of earlier days of mission in OSCs, with strong emphasis on faith in God and not in structures. Many candidates go without sufficient funding rather than wait until fully supported. Although this attitude could be seen as admirable and proof of strong faith in God, the consequences are often serious in terms of attrition rates.

The life cycle of mission organisations in NSCs seems to follow the same pattern as elsewhere, moving from movement to organisation and eventually becoming a bureaucratic institution. This is certainly true for denominational structures that were born through foreign missions or divisions owing to non-conformist movements within Evangelical churches. The tendency is to gradually expand the organisation in terms both of administration and buildings. After some time a significant part of the budget is assigned to the maintenance of such bureaucratic systems and buildings, generally not favouring direct investments on missionary activities. When there is shortage of funds, as often happens in NSCs, there is a clear danger that the mission organisation does not fulfil its purpose, jeopardising its usefulness in sending and caring for missionaries.

Such financial pressure is certainly serious and needs attention in order to ensure the survival of mission movements. Several of these mission organisations have started different forms of businesses such as companies, stores and service agencies to support their mission activities. One example is the Brazilian IURD, which has invested heavily in radio and TV stations, bookstores, travel agencies and so forth. On a smaller scale,

however, the involvement of business people has led to new models of financial support, as seen in earlier discussions. The question that this trend raises is again the issue of true voluntarism in mission movements, creating a dependency on business revenues instead of relying on philanthropic donations. Although there is nothing new or necessarily illegal in searching for alternative sources for supporting mission, in several NSCs, government authorities have started to look at the financial sources of both churches and mission organisations, questioning the application of their funds. The main legal issue is that donations to non-profit entities are not allowed to be used for profit-making investments.

There is also a danger that pragmatism takes over to the detriment of philanthropic and moral principles that are usually defended by Evangelical churches, for example attracting people through gifts or false promises of prosperity. Methods are, in this type of case, evaluated by their efficiency in producing measurable results such as number of converts or of new congregations, disregarding basic criteria for contextualisation and respect for receiving cultures. The famous phrase that the “end justifies the means” could easily be applied in many mission efforts. The ‘parish-mentality’ is also seen quite often as denominations grow and expand. Mission is then considered in relation to the presence of the denominational identity and places are described as ‘unreached’ when the particular church has not been established there yet.

An issue of debate regarding mission movements in NSCs has been the fact that some of these organisations focus exclusively on their own culture, either in neighbouring countries or diasporic groups in the West and thus being criticised for not being cross-cultural in their activities. The question also arises when missionaries are sent within

their own country, working with a different culture than their own.<sup>5</sup> In this study the definition of missionary has respected the understanding of the national mission associations in the countries studied and the main consensus has been that in crossing either cultural or geographical barriers the missionary work is seen as a valid form of cross-cultural enterprise. In most cases of diasporic mission, the target groups are a mix of first generation immigrants and second or even third generation descendants who have assimilated much from local cultures. Missionary activity in other cultures within huge countries like India and Brazil is certainly cross-cultural, owing to the diversity of ethnic groups.

The relationship between mission movements in OSCs and NSCs is another important aspect related to worldwide mission today. Co-operation and inter-dependency are currently terms in vogue, although the practical application of these aspirations is usually a challenge. The different financial situation, ministry focuses, pre-field training of personnel and church-relationships make collaborative efforts sometimes difficult. There has been a tendency for OSCs to provide financial and technical support while NSCs supply missionaries. That has, however, often created the idea that the main decisions should be taken by those who give the funds, determining the direction the work should take, as usually seen in donations to NGOs. The 'strings' attached are frequently a hindrance for mission movements in receiving funds from wealthy donors without compromising their freedom to pursue their own vision and ministry focus.

In a number of cases, however, the co-operation has been successful and collaborative projects have been developed around the world. Some of the strategic partnerships that

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<sup>5</sup> This is because a common understanding of cross-cultural mission has been to send missionaries to other nations to work within a different culture than their own

were formed in earlier years between mission organisations from OSCs have now also incorporated missions from NSCs. An interesting example is ACT, a co-operation of Christian NGOs and mission organisations working in North Africa. Founded initially by four Western missions in the early 1980s, it has grown to become a multi-national association with basically equal participation from OSCs and NSCs.

There is certainly huge potential in a global co-operation between Christian organisations, representing both OSCs and NSCs, at the same time that important issues need to be discussed and resolved. An initiative called the 'Global Dialogue' has gathered mission leaders from both OSCs and NSCs and has raised some of these critical issues related to co-operation such as financial dependency, shared leadership, common strategies, etc, both in the North-South relationship between mission organisations as well as that of South-South.<sup>6</sup> The challenge, however, is to build collaborative efforts in the very competitive context that Evangelical cross-cultural mission has turned out to be. As seen in history, the tendency has been more towards rivalry and competition than co-operation. The entrepreneurial trends among many of the newer mission organisations have definitely added to this competition, often in the pursuit of more effective methods than a competitor's.

An important contribution that mission movements in NSCs are making to the worldwide mission enterprise is presenting new models of missionary work and consequently also new categories of missionary, thinking 'out of the box' with innovative ideas and sometimes redefining traditional notions regarding sending and supporting people in cross-cultural ministry. The whole diasporic mission that has

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<sup>6</sup> The Global Dialogue was initiated by some mission leaders from Nigeria, the Philippines, India and Guatemala inviting mission executives from OSCs to join. The Dialogue is currently linked to the Mission Commission of WEA and has a broad representation from both OSCs and NSCs



grown rapidly in the last years following the migration particularly to Western countries is one example of this. A significant number of mission workers have been sent out by these newer organisations, often entering 'closed' countries, such as some of the Islamic nations through secular jobs or university studies. The involvement of receiving churches, facilitating the support and adjustment of foreign missionaries, has also been a characteristic of many mission movements in NSCs.

A fundamental question is whether the growing number of mission movements from NSCs will be welcomed in OSCs with a different emphasis in relation to the Christian faith. Just as traditional receiving countries often reacted against the foreignness of Christianity translated into their culture, reactions are clearly seen in the corresponding process of missionising OSCs by NSCs. In order to minimise rejection and conflicts between missionaries from the Global South and national leadership in European churches, the European Evangelical Mission Association (EEMA) started a 'Welcome Project', aiming at facilitating the reception and establishment of missionaries from NSCs in Europe. A code of good practice, developed by EEMA, has been signed by both sending and receiving churches and mission organisations defining terms of co-operation. How this agreement will be followed and respected is still an open question, since there is no legal way to force all involved to fulfil their obligations. On the other hand, it is an interesting initiative that, if applied in mission history, could have prevented the frequent church divisions and strong denominationalism seen in most countries today. Unfortunately, mission movements from NSCs tend to augment the split among Evangelicals around the world, introducing their own denominational and ecclesiastical systems in countries they enter.

In an era of globalisation, neo-colonialism has arisen, creating new situations of imposition and dependency. Many countries, particularly in Africa, today depend heavily on financial aid from abroad and Evangelical mission movements are deeply involved in most of these countries. Relief work is often linked to requirements that need to be accomplished and followed by the receiving countries, putting them in a position similar to that of former colonies. The contextualisation process of Evangelicalism is therefore even more critical, not adding to this neo-colonialism but giving local churches the freedom to develop ecclesiastical systems according to their own cultural setting. Once again, translation of Christianity needs to be accompanied by a contextualisation process that denotes ownership and full control by the receiving culture.

The new mission force will certainly inspire more detailed and more comprehensive history and analysis than the findings of this research. What is clear, however, is that mission movements in NSCs need to be taken seriously and that they will continue changing the global scenario of Evangelical mission.

### **3. Areas that Need More Research**

Although this study has tried to cover many topics related to mission movements that have emerged in the Global South, there are undoubtedly areas that need more research and analysis. The international scope is complex and the range of situations within global mission is enormous. No single study or discussion can be all-inclusive and there will always be important aspects that have been overlooked. Some of these are identified below.

### **3.1. Countries in the Global South where mission movements have not emerged**

A deeper study of countries in the Global South that have been the object of mission efforts from OSCs, and where national Evangelical churches have been established but no autochthonous mission movements have emerged, would surely add substantially to the understanding of the mission dynamics in NSCs. Although examples have been given in this study and some reasons for the lack of mission initiatives in these countries have been considered, there is need for more complete case studies. The study of countries such as Uruguay, Paraguay, Francophone nations in Africa, Japan and Indonesia, where few cross-cultural mission initiatives have emerged so far, would greatly contribute to knowledge in this area.

### **3.2. Other countries in the Global South where mission movements have emerged and possible reasons for this**

It would be helpful to use the methodology adopted in this study to determine contributing factors for the emergence of mission movements in NSCs other than those considered in the current research. Countries such as Mexico and Argentina in Latin America, Nigeria and South Africa in Africa and South Korea and the Philippines in Asia, have probably an equally interesting history of the translation process in their nations and of mission movements coming out of the established and contextualised Evangelical churches.

### **3.3. The correlation between entrepreneurialism and culture**

It would also be important to find out more about the correlation between cultural characteristics of people and their ability to foster initiatives and entrepreneurialism in order to better understand why certain nationalities seem to have a tendency towards creativeness and leadership. Are there cultural characteristics, such as national pride and child-raising methods, that make people better prepared or more inclined to start organisations or business activities? And how has that affected the national churches in the different ministry areas? In the discussion regarding leadership styles (Chapter Three) some characteristics were mentioned as more prevalent in particular cultures, based on data gathered by the GLOBE research project. However, no in-depth research has been carried out at a global level on ecclesiastical and missional leadership from a sociological perspective.

### **3.4. Mission movements, voluntarism and business activities**

A lot has been said about voluntarism in relation to mission movements in this study. A question remains, however, regarding the more recent developments of mission organisations and the degree of voluntarism among the personnel both in sending offices and on the mission fields. There is no doubt that financial issues have been increasingly important for the sustainability of these organisations and for the retention of missionaries working abroad. Creative ways have been developed in order to provide necessary funds and, even if the 'faith-in-God' factor is still present, the impression from the interviews with mission executives is that business activities are more and more common in order to supply the missions with extra resources. Some examples have been given in the country-specific chapters, but a more comprehensive analysis of

the role business plays in the current worldwide Evangelical mission enterprise would be useful.

Another issue that could usefully be considered regarding voluntarism, concerns the pressure from mission organisations and denominations that local communities are put under to invest in supporting missionaries and mission projects. This would require more contact with local pastors and leaders. Has cross-cultural mission become a fashion or is it part of a package that all churches must have in order to be considered progressive and forward-thinking? Some mission executives, and some literature on the role of the local church in mission, clearly suggest that the high expectations of participation laid on local communities could result in a kind of exhaustion and negative feelings regarding cross-cultural mission.<sup>7</sup> It would certainly be helpful to consider this further, particularly in NSCs where the main supporting base for mission movements is local churches.

### **3.5. Evaluation of the translation and contextualisation processes where NSCs' mission movements are active**

This thesis has shown that the translatability principle of Christianity has proved to be effective in many countries where Western missions have been working over the centuries and where the Christian faith has been assimilated in many cultures, particularly by the first generation converts. The difficulties arise, however, when established churches seek to contextualise ecclesiastical systems and expressions of faith within their local culture. Owing to imposed models and leadership training that

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<sup>7</sup> See for example the Consultation promoted by COMIBAM in Panama 1994 when mission executives and pastors gathered to discuss the relationship between local churches and mission organisations in the Latin American context. The plenary texts are collected in the book *La Iglesia Latina en Misión Mundial* [The Latin Church in Global Mission], published by COMIBAM International, 1997

have perpetuated a foreign theology and praxis, nationals have had few tools with which to work on contextualised forms. It is often when the Bible is translated into the local language that conditions become favourable to the contextualisation process. This study has focused primarily on the emergence of mission movements in NSCs and not so much on the performance and outcomes of these mission organisations on their so-called 'mission fields'. The question is whether they have been more successful in translating the Christian faith to other cultures than OSCs, encouraging receiving communities to adopt a constructive contextualisation of Christianity. Examples given in the study show that it is highly likely that NSCs have not been any more successful than their forerunners. However a more systematic investigation would provide more evidence that this is the case. It should be noted that it is difficult to evaluate the permanent outcomes when the movements are still very young, as in some of the NSCs.

### **3.6. Updated statistics on Evangelical mission**

This study generally analyses statistics up to the year 2000 so there is need for a further study to consider the growth and changes in the way NSCs have operated over the last decade. A new edition of the book *Operation World* is being prepared and will be launched in 2010. However, the main editor of the book, Jason Mandryk, says that statistics to be included will not support accurate comparison with those of previous years for three main reasons: the development of a new kind of missionary, moving "away from the traditional full-time missionary serving long term in an agency, and more towards short 'termism', toward tent-making, business-as-mission, and non-residential mission"; the lesser importance given by majority world missions on metrics

and statistical analysis; and, the fact that many organisations are not supplying others with details regarding their mission workers for security reasons.<sup>8</sup>

The financial fluctuation, political instability, stagnation of church growth and other factors influencing the development of mission initiatives could easily change the direction mission movements are taking in NSCs. Complementary studies will certainly be needed to ensure the continued analysis of the trends identified in this study.

#### **4. Contribution Made by this Research**

This research is unique in its analytical and comparative study of Evangelical mission movements in NSCs in three different continents. Apart from the relevance of the historical description of the development of mission organisations in the studied countries, the following contributions to the area of Mission Studies can be mentioned:

##### **4.1. A method for analysing the start and development of any mission movement**

A methodology for analysing the start and development of any mission movement has been developed during this research, based on a qualitative study of mission organisations in NSCs. Specific factors that have been decisive in the emergence of mission movements have been identified, giving a framework for similar studies of mission organisations worldwide. These factors have been defined and divided into internal, external and international, in relation to the Evangelical church context in which they appear. Using the countries of Brazil, Ghana and India as major case studies,

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<sup>8</sup> Mandryk, Jason, in E-mail of May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009

the research has shown that it is possible to determine the main reasons for any mission organisation to emerge and grow and consequently make comparisons between countries.

#### **4.2. An historical review of Evangelical mission movements in the NSCs as part of global Church history**

Starting from the analysis of the translation process of Christianity, Evangelical mission movements have been inserted into the general Church history of each country and their emergence linked to the developments of Evangelical churches. This historical review and comparison of mission movements in NSCs is unique and provides a model for understanding the place and the role of these movements within global Evangelicalism. This responds to the general criticism, mentioned in Chapter One, that Church and Mission history is often viewed from a Western perspective and that more recent developments in the Global South have not been taken into account.

#### **4.3. A comparison between NSCs and OSCs**

The study has also presented and evaluated similarities and differences between mission movements in OSCs and NSCs through the description of key elements of mission movements and the ways mission has been performed. This comparison shows that there are issues of mutual concern as well as areas where newer mission movements could complement the older ones. The comparison also provides tools for collaborative efforts, improving support structures such as member care, pre-field and in-service training and strategic co-operation.



#### **4.4. An evaluation of the viability of NSCs' mission movements**

The results of the study provide a framework for an evaluation of the viability of newer mission movements, one of the concerns referred to in Chapter One. Based on the movements studied in the three countries, some general conclusions have been possible, identifying areas where these newer mission movements are strong and can play an important role as well as areas that need attention in order to ensure continuity and sustainability of mission initiatives in NSCs. Some of these areas are financial stability, administrative structures, leadership development, pre-field training of candidates and member care of missionaries on the field.

#### **4.5. Relating mission organisations to voluntarism in society**

The research has also related the emergence of mission organisations to society and factors that are external to the Church context. This has been done particularly in relation to voluntarism, being the main organisational model used by mission movements in history and in current initiatives. The trend among mission leaders has been to ignore the importance of these external factors, as seen in the study, often taking for granted that Christians should volunteer for service within the church, owing to their faith and their loyalty to the congregation. The thesis demonstrates that voluntarism has been a key element in the emergence of mission organisations as well as an important part of society in general.

## Conclusion

The main findings of this research support the proposed thesis, showing that mission movements in traditional mission fields have emerged partly because of a translated and assimilated motivation towards mission and expansion, transmitted by Western missions. In addition, other specific factors such as the numerical growth of Evangelical churches, the development of a contextualised mission theology, availability of resources and entrepreneurial leadership have also been internal reasons for the emergence of mission initiatives in NSCs. However, the picture would not be complete without recognising the importance of external factors (related to society in general) such as voluntarism, economic growth and social and political developments favouring Evangelical mission enterprises, and of international factors such as exposure to conferences and contacts on a global level, involvement in diasporic mission and the role played by national associations of missions. Some of these contributing factors have proved to be more decisive than others, particularly those that indicate intentionality and a deliberate decision to engage in cross-cultural mission based upon the belief that traditional mission fields should also become mission forces.

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#### **Ghana and Africa:**

Aboague-Mensah, Robert, General Secretary of the Christian Council of Ghana (Accra, November 14, 2002)

Afful, Susan, working at the Resource Department of Pioneers Africa (Accra, November 19, 2002)

Agboto, Dorothy, professor at the Trinity Theological Seminary (Accra, November 16, 2002)

Amegah, S.K., Assistant Editor of the magazine Pentecost Fire and Elder of the Church of Pentecost (Accra, November 19, 2002)

Anim, Emanuel, Ghanaian Theologian (All Nations Christian College, Ware, UK, November 29, 2001)

Anyomi, Seth, Founder and Director of African Christian Mission (Accra, November 15, 2002)

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Antwy, Stephen and Ruby Mikulencak, Evangelical Missionary Alliance and SIM (Accra, November 14, 2002)

Anukun-Dabson, Emmanuel, Field Director of the Christian Outreach Fellowship (Accra, November 15, 2002)

Arcton, Ed, Founder and President of Liberation Mission Foundation (Accra, November 14, 2002)

Campbell, Ross, WEC missionary in Ghana (1969-1993) and first Coordinator of MANI – Movement of African National Initiatives, May 9, 2007

Dorkunor, Sampson, President of the Living Bread Mission (Accra, November 15, 2002)

Graham, Francis, General Overseer of the Foursquare Gospel Church in Ghana (Accra, November 18, 2002)

Howell, Allison, Researcher and Teacher at the Akrofi-Christaller Centre (Akropong-Akuapem, November 18, 2002)

Kumah, Divine, Journalist and General Secretary of the National Association of Evangelicals of Ghana (Accra, November 18, 2002)

Kwami, S.Y., Director of Mission and Evangelism of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana (Accra, November 15, 2002)

Nkumah, Jonathan, General Overseer of the Evangelical Church of Ghana (Accra, November 14, 2002)

Ocran, Albert S., Founder and Director of the Torchbearers (Accra, November 14, 2002)

Opuko, Solomon, Coordinator of the Christian Witness Strategy (Accra, November 15, 2002)

Ouwejan, Hank and Jelte Greydanus, Dutch missionaries of WEC-International (Accra, November 16, 2002)

Takyi, Albert, General Secretary of the Ghana Evangelical Missions Association (GEMA) (Accra: November 15, 2002)

Tei-Kwabla, Daniel, Former Principle of the Missionary Training Institute of the African Christian Mission (Accra, November 17, 2002)

### **India and Asia:**

Akbhar, C., Founder and Director of Indian Outreach Missions (Nagpur, March 29, 2004)

Amair, Anthony, Director of Leads Outreach (Hyderabad, March 31, 2004)

Bardhan, Suranjit, Missionary of the Friends Missionary Prayer Band (Cuttack, March 27, 2004)

Barik, Jyotish, Director of S. K. Ministry (Cuttack, March 26, 2004)

Christopher, Jenny, Associate Secretary for Church Ministry of Indian Evangelical Mission (Hyderabad, April 2, 2004)

- Das, Manes, Director of Eternal Life Fellowship Society (Hyderabad, March 30, 2004)
- Deudas, Israel, Regional Director of Friends Missionary Prayer Band (Nagpur, March 29, 2004)
- Dip, Alok, Founder and Director of Mercy Ministries (Cuttack, March 27, 2004)
- Dukhu, I., Secretary-Director of HEAL India (Cuttack, March 27, 2004)
- Jayakumar, D., President of Bible Believing Churches & Missions (Hyderabad, March 31, 2004)
- Khandpari, Saroj, Founder and Director of El Bethel Ministries (Cuttack, March 27, 2004)
- Kulothungan, D. B., General Secretary of Maharashtra Village Ministries (Hyderabad, March 30, 2004)
- Kumar, Pranab Kishor, Director of New Life Mission for India (Cuttack, March 26, 2004)
- Lima, Eliya, Director of Love Orissa (Cuttack, March 27, 2004)
- Manmothe, E. L., Secretary of the Church of the Nazarene (Nagpur, March 29, 2004)
- Naik, Samanta, Director of Happy Valley Ministries (Cuttack, March 27, 2004)
- Nuyak, Samanesh, General Secretary of Bengal Orissa Bihar Baptist Churches' Association (Cuttack, March 27, 2004)
- Parichha, P. R., President of India Evangelistic Association (Cuttack, March 25, 2004)
- Paulose, K. M., Director of Malabar Mission Service (Hyderabad, March 31, 2004)
- Patra, Susanta, Founder and Director of National Fellowship (Calcutta, April 3, 2004)
- Rajendran, K., Executive Director of the Indian Mission Association (Hoddesdon, UK, February 28, 2002; Hyderabad, India, March 30, 2004 and Budapest, Hungary June 20, 2007)
- Sahu, Surendra Kumar, Secretary of the Bible Society of India Orissa Bible House (Cuttack, March 25, 2004)
- Samuel, John, Coordinator of Training in Evangelism Needs and Technology (Hyderabad, March 30, 2004)
- Sekar, C., Director of Sadhana (Hyderabad, March 31, 2004)
- Singh, Anjan, Founder and Director of Betala Mission (Calcutta, April 3, 2004)

Thomas, M. A., Founder of Emmanuel Ministries International (Hyderabad, April 2, 2004)

Thomas, P. D., Director of Bethel Educational Sovereign Trust (Cuttack, March 27, 2004)

Visvasam, Mark, Director of India Campus Crusade for Christ (Hyderabad, April, 2, 2004)

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## APPENDICES

These appendices include the responses to the questionnaires in India, Ghana and Brazil, in that order so the complete English version comes first.

### APPENDIX 1

#### ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES ON MISSION STRUCTURES

##### INDIA – 30 MISSIONS

1. Country: India

2. Name of the Mission:

3. Address:

4. When did the mission start?

*Out of these 30 mission organisations, 4 were started in the 1960s, 3 in the 1970s, 10 in the 1980s, 10 in the 1990s and 3 in the 2000s.*

5. Who started the mission?

6. Is the mission?

☐ Denominational - 5

☐ Inter-denominational - 25 (included also the non denominational)

☐ Non-denominational

☐ Other. Please specify

Observation: The question was not well formulated because few understood the difference between being Inter-denominational (here used as being formed by two or more denominations) and Non denominational (free from any denominational linkage). So I used the combined results.

7. If linked to some denomination, which?

8. What were the main reasons for starting the mission? Please comment.

☐ Personal initiative of the founder - 14

☐ Decision by the denomination/church - 1

☐ A group of leaders that decided to start a mission - 6

☐ Overtaking of mission structure from a foreign mission - 0

☐ Local initiative in a local church/seminary - 2

☐ Hindrance of foreign missionaries to enter the country - 1

☐ Awareness of the mission task - 13

☐ Other. Please specify

Comment:

9. Were there any other factors in the society that influenced the beginning of the mission? Please comment.

☐ Political factors -2

☐ Economic factors - 6

☐ Sociological factors - 13

☐ Religious factors - 18

☐ Other. Please specify - 2

Comment: Revival in the churches – 3; The situation of the poor in the society – 10; Need for a supportive structure – 1; The tolerance of the government – 1

10. What kind of work does the mission do?

☐ Church planting – 20

☐ Church development - 11

☐ Training - 22

☐ Evangelism - 20

☐ Social projects - 21

☐ Media - 3

☐ Literature - 13

☐ Bible translation - 3

☐ Other. Please specify: Children ministry – 1; Research – 2; Youth ministry - 1

11. When did you send out your first missionary?

*Most of the organisations sent out their first field worker the same year that they started.*

12. How many missionaries do you have today? Are there any statistics available from the start until now?

13. Where do they work? How many workers are there in each area?

☐ In urban areas - 19

☐ In rural areas - 26

☐ In their own culture in their own country - 24

☐ In their own culture in other countries - 2

☐ In other culture in their own country - 14

☐ In other culture in other country - 4

☐ Other. Please specify:

14. How many people work in the home staff?

15. Do you have offices in other countries? If yes, where and how many work there that are not included in the category of missionaries?

*Very few had any kind of representation or office in other countries. The exception is the denominational structures that are linked to their denominational counter partners in other countries, and the Indian branch of International Missions such as OM, YWAM, Campus Crusade, etc.*

16. How do you finance the mission?

- ☐ Contributions from the churches - 15
- ☐ Private donators – 23 (many of these donators are from Europe and North America)
- ☐ Subsidies from churches and missions in other countries - 10
- ☐ Business - 1
- ☐ Foundations - 2
- ☐ Government - 0
- ☐ Other. Please specify: Member fees – 1; Family funds – 3; “Tentmakers” - 2

17. What is your definition of “mission”?

*Two aspects are repeated in almost all the questionnaires: that the mission has to do with sending of people to some other region/area/place where they plant churches and/or work with social projects and, that the mission is holistic, dealing both with spiritual and social needs of people.*

18. Are there any significant changes or events in the mission the last 10 years?

*Some of the answers:*

- *The emergence of the movement called Sevek Samiti (The Servants' group) – within the Evangelical churches in West/Bengal (Calcutta)*
- *A new confidence among Government officers towards the Christian missions (Orissa)*
- *Mass conversions and persecutions (Orissa)*
- *The split of churches in many denominations (Orissa)*
- *Many new pastors and leaders (Orissa)*
- *The country is closing for open evangelism (Hyderabad)*
- *Political pressure from Hindu fundamentalist (Hyderabad)*
- *Local training has increased number of local leaders (Bangalore)*
- *A strong focus on “people groups” (Nagpur)*
- *Translation of the Bible to tribal languages (Bangalore)*

19. What are the main characteristics of the mission? In what way does it differ from other mission organisations you know?

*Some of the answers:*

- *We do not establish churches where others already are present (Calcutta)*
- *To show that the Christian faith is not alien to Indian people and culture (Orissa)*
- *A holistic work – Children's home, Bible college and Church planting (Orissa)*
- *Indirect evangelism through literacy and education programmes (Orissa)*
- *Training of missionaries to be self-supportive (Hyderabad)*

- *The only working among some of the people groups (Bangalore)*
- *The mission does not depend on resources from outside (Ghaziabad)*
- *Mobilising locals to reach their own people (Nagpur)*
- *North Indian mission by north Indians (Calcutta)*
- *Aggressive evangelism and saturation (Bangalore)*
- *We have strict instructions not to answer this question (Thrissur)*

20. Give a brief history of the mission.

21. What are the relevant issues for the mission to deal with today and the near future?  
*The answers were often linked to financial issues. Other issues: reach out to the higher classes and casts in the society, mobilising the churches for mission, how to face the growing persecution from fanatical groups, better training for the field workers, social concern and the need for revival in the churches.*

22. How is the mission structured?

*The missions affiliated to the IMA are required to follow some patterns in terms of administration. Therefore, the majority of the missions interviewed have a board and a yearly assembly for elections. But in most of the cases where the initiative of forming a mission was of one person, the founder is still the chairman or executive director of the organisation.*

## APPENDIX 2

### ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES ON MISSION STRUCTURES

#### GHANA - 12 MISSIONS

5 Denominational Missions

7 Inter or Non-denominational Agencies

4. When the Missions started:

Before 1970 – 1 mission  
 1971 – 1980 – 3 missions  
 1981 – 1990 – 3 missions  
 1991 – 2000 – 5 missions

8. How was the mission founded?

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
| a. Personal initiative of the founder                      | - 5 missions |
| b. Decision by the denomination/church                     | - 2 missions |
| c. A group of leaders that decided to start a mission      | - 4 missions |
| d. Overtaking of mission structure from a foreign mission  |              |
| e. Local initiative in a local church/seminary             |              |
| f. Hindrance of foreign missionaries to enter the country  |              |
| g. Awareness of the mission task                           |              |
| h. Other. Please specify - Branch of International Mission | - 1 mission  |

9. Were there any other factors in the society that influenced the beginning of the mission?

- a. Political factors - 3 missions
- b. Economic factors -
- c. Sociological factors - 2 missions
- d. Religious factors
- e. Other. Internal factors in the Churches - 6 missions

10. What kind of work does the mission do?

- a. Church planting - 11 missions
- b. Church development - 7 missions
- c. Training - 10 missions
- d. Evangelism - 11 missions
- e. Social projects - 8 missions
- f. Media
- g. Literature - 2 missions
- h. Bible translation - 1 mission
- i. Other. Children Ministry - 2 missions
- Youth/Student Ministry - 1 mission

12. Number of Missionaries:

Denominational Missions - Average of 35.6 missionaries per mission

Non denominational - Average of 14.7 missionaries per mission

All the missions – 286 missionaries - Average of 23.8 missionaries per mission

(According to Johnstone: total number of 750 missionaries, 38%, with 60 agencies, 20%. Average: 12.5 missionaries per mission)

13. Where do they work?

- a. In urban areas - 12 missions
- b. In rural areas - 9 missions
- c. In their own culture in their own country - 8 missions
- d. In their own culture in other countries - 3 missions
- e. In other culture in their own country - 8 missions
- f. In other culture in other country - 9 missions
- g. Other.

16. How do you finance the mission?

- a. Contributions from the churches - 11 missions
- b. Private donators - 4 missions
- c. Subsidies from churches and missions in other countries - 6 missions
- d. Business
- e. Foundations - 4 missions
- f. Government
- g. Other. Please specify

22. How is the mission structured?

On the paper, most of the missions function as democratic organisations with a board or a council that give the mission its legal status. In practice, the executive leadership is strong and take the daily decisions. In some cases the board does not gather and the leaders have to decide for themselves what to do.

The denominational missions follow the leadership model that their denominational structure has with more staff involved. The nondenominational agencies work with less bureaucracy and a more levelled leadership model. Often they do not have the same financial base for hiring people and have to rely more on volunteers.

In terms of office facilities, the denominational missions have better conditions of localities and equipments. The nondenominational agencies use the office of the leader or rent a place that do not cost too much. The exceptions are those agencies linked to an international mission such as Pioneers Africa and Christian Witness Strategy.

The mission model used by the Ghanaian missions is very much like the one seen in the traditional mission organisations that arrived in Ghana. One of the innovative structures is the Torchbearers Mission (describe the mission).

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES ON MISSION STRUCTURES**

#### **BRAZIL - 12 MISSIONS**

1. País: Brasil
2. Nome da Organização Missionária: 12 Mission Organisations
3. Endereço:
4. Quando a missão foi iniciada?
5. Quem foi o fundador da missão?
6. A missão é:
  - ☐ Denominacional - 4
  - ☐ Inter-denominacional - 8
  - ☐ Outro. Especifique
7. Se vinculada a uma denominação, qual?
8. De que forma a missão foi fundada?
  - ☐ Iniciativa pessoal do fundador - 2
  - ☐ Decisão de uma denominação - 4
  - ☐ Iniciativa de um grupo de líderes - 4



- ☐ Continuação de uma estrutura internacional de missões - 2
- ☐ Iniciativa de uma igreja local ou seminário
- ☐ Outro. Especifique

9. Quais foram os principais fatores que influenciaram na fundação da missão?

- ☐ Fatores políticos
- ☐ Fatores econômicos - 2
- ☐ Fatores sociológicos - 1
- ☐ Fatores religiosos - 7
- ☐ Fatores internos da igreja/denominação - 6
- ☐ Outro: Especifique – Apoio logístico a missões - 1

Comentários:

10. Que tipo de trabalho a missão faz?

- ☐ Plantação de igrejas - 10
- ☐ Desenvolvimento de igrejas - 9
- ☐ Treinamento - 10
- ☐ Evangelismo - 11
- ☐ Projetos Sociais - 10
- ☐ Comunicação em Massa - 3
- ☐ Literatura - 5
- ☐ Tradução da Bíblia - 2
- ☐ Outro: Especifique - 3

11. Quando o primeiro missionário foi enviado?

12. Quantos missionários a missão tem hoje? Existe estatística disponível?

13. Onde os missionários trabalham? Quantos em cada tipo de campo?

- ☐ Em centros urbanos - 10
- ☐ Na zona rural - 4
- ☐ Com pessoas de sua própria cultura dentro do Brasil - 3
- ☐ Com pessoas de sua própria cultura fora do Brasil - 3
- ☐ Com pessoas de outra cultura dentro de Brasil - 7
- ☐ Com pessoas de outra cultura fora do Brasil - 10
- ☐ Outro. Especifique - 1

14. Quantas pessoas trabalham no escritório da missão?

15. A missão tem escritórios em outros países? Se sim, onde e quantos funcionários?

16. Como a missão financia os seus custos e o sustento dos missionários?

- ☐ Contribuições de igrejas - 12
- ☐ Doações particulares - 11
- ☐ Subsídios de igrejas e/ou missões de outros países - 5
- ☐ Vendas e/ou produção - 5
- ☐ Fundações - 3
- ☐ Verba do Governo
- ☐ Outro. Especifique

17. Qual é a definição de “missão” usada pela organização?

18. Descreva brevemente a história da missão.

19. Houve importantes mudanças ou eventos na história da missão nos últimos 10 anos?

20. Quais são as principais características da missão? De que forma difere de outras missões?

21. Quais são as questões mais importantes e os maiores desafios para a missão atualmente?

22. Descreva brevemente a estrutura da missão?

23. Nome e função da pessoa que forneceu os dados

24. Data